3 DEVELOPMENT ISSUES FOR HELMAND

3.1 THE NATIONAL SCENE

The recognised core objectives for international development assistance to Afghanistan are:

Poverty alleviation: In particular the provision of food security and the capacity to be economically free through work.

Social development: With emphasis on the rights of women and children, for families to be socially and economically independent and the provision of general health care and education.

Governance: Creating the environment for individuals and communities to work collectively for their mutual wellbeing.

Each of these elements is briefly discussed below.

3.1.1 Poverty Alleviation

In rural Afghanistan, poverty is closely linked to access to resources. In a country of subsistence farmers, where over 80% of all families grow their own food, access to land and water is the prerequisite to survival. [23] In rural areas the population can be seen in terms of three broad categories representing their general level of food security:

- those who are capable of being food self-sufficient;
- those who are marginally or potentially self-sufficient; and
- those who have limited opportunities to provide for the needs of themselves and their families at an acceptable level.

There are a series of subgroups in each broad category, based on the level of resources they control and their likely capacity to be able to respond to actual or potential opportunities to take the initiative in meeting their food security needs. Table 1 sets out these groups.

Table 1 Strategic activity matrix for farm-level food security

<table>
<tr><td>Category</td><td colspan="3">Access to resources</td></tr>
<tr><td>Location</td><td>Accessible</td><td>Distant</td><td>Remote</td></tr>
<tr><td>Self sufficient</td><td rowspan="9">Group who are best placed to utilise present approaches to high-technology interventions with surplus output which can be marketed</td><td rowspan="6">High-technology solutions, but possibly at lower production levels and marketable surplus</td><td rowspan="9">Need a new approach using better yielding low-input options and develop remote area economic activity to assist food security</td></tr>
<tr><td>- large landowners – non-resident</td></tr>
<tr><td>- large landowners – resident</td></tr>
<tr><td>- medium to large area farmers</td></tr>
<tr><td>- kuchis with medium to large flocks</td></tr>
<tr><td>Marginally self-sufficient</td></tr>
<tr><td>- medium to small area farmers</td><td rowspan="3">Help with better technology but will need support</td></tr>
<tr><td>- sharecroppers with some resources</td></tr>
<tr><td>- kuchis with medium flocks</td></tr>
<tr><td>Not self-sufficient</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="3">with micro-credit and access to inputs. Also increased economic activity for jobs</td><td rowspan="3">Group most at risk from food insecurity. Assist by increased</td></tr>
<tr><td>- farm labourers on share basis</td></tr>
<tr><td>- kuchis with small flocks or no animals</td></tr>
<tr><td>'- ex-government employees with no land</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">economic activity: On or off-farm wage employment or in-home activities, to earn cash income to buy food.</td></tr>
<tr><td>- landless families with adult men</td></tr>
<tr><td>- landless families without adult men</td></tr>
</table>

Source: FAO, Food Security for Rural Areas, Islamabad 1997.

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[22] Shairzai, F, *et al.* op. cit, p. 20.

[23] Sloane P H, 1997. *Food Security Strategy for Rural Areas.* Consultants Report, FAO Islamabad September 1997. The analysis in this section is drawn from Section 3 of this report, pp.9-12.

While the various groups can be seen in terms of a hierarchy of wealth or access to resources, they should not be seen as mutually exclusive nor necessarily permanent. In each case, it is the access to resources which is the defining element in terms of food security. The dividing line in the hierarchy is between those who actually or potentially control enough resources to provide for themselves, and those who do not. The landless peasant who gains a sharecropping agreement giving access to land and water can immediately move from a high-risk to a low-risk position.

To improve food security in the agricultural sector, the objective of external assistance should be to move this dividing line as far down the hierarchy of food insecurity as possible. This should be either by increasing the productive capacity of the resources available to groups at risk, or by generating economic activity which will provide gainful employment. Raising productivity levels across the sector also increases the capacity to produce surpluses for sale to non-farming/urban groups. The matrix in Table 1 links the various categories and their location classes to highlight the general options for action for farm-level food security and the alleviation of poverty among the different combinations of population class and location.

A distinction should be drawn between options for action and the willingness or ability of those involved to implement those options. Some non-resident large landowners or owner-farmers are likely to be indifferent to the opportunity to increase output through investment in technology. They might see themselves as able to gain sufficient return on their capital from the efforts of small sharecroppers. In reality, no group will act as a single unit and their actions will cover a wide spectrum of possibilities, including illicit drugs as well as food crops.

Of those ranked as not self-sufficient in terms of producing their own food, the potentially most favourable position is to have on-farm work or to sharecrop for a landlord or large flock owner. If the owner is willing to implement high productivity activities, then there is potential for some benefit to flow to the worker/sharecropper. Changes in this area are strongly linked to the impact of land tenure and sharecropper arrangements and to the prospect of micro-credit to assist rural workers without capital to put a first foot on the technology ladder. For the remainder, the best prospect is to become involved in some form of non-farm economic activity. In many rural areas, men who cannot get local work are forced outside the area to find paid work. This position is very evident in Helmand where there is a large group of itinerant workers drawn-in by the prospect of paid work in opium production.

3.1.2 Social development – the role for rural women

In Afghanistan, rural women play a significant role in household management and family decision making. They are often trustees of the household income and influence income generating decisions. Women rarely play an observable role in the fields except perhaps at harvest, and generally it is the women from the poorer households who undertake field labour. However, women are actively engaged in economic activity both inside and outside the home where traditionally they have been involved in livestock rearing and horticulture.

Because of the closed nature of Afghan households, it is difficult to be specific about the activities and workload of rural women. However they are wholly responsible for the food preparation and household maintenance activities. At times of peak farm workload, where additional labour is hired, the women of the household must provide meals and tea for the extra men without any other assistance, which can be a major additional burden.

Women are the agents of change, especially in conservative rural communities. Creating economic activities for women both inside and outside the home is a key strategy for alleviating poverty and developing good governance.

3.1.3 Governance

The problem of governance has bedevilled the modern Afghan state since its formation in 1880. It revolves around a series of issues: the balance of power between the centre and the periphery, between the cities and the rural areas and between the rulers and the ruled. The current manifestation of this ongoing problem is the role of the Taliban militia. They now control some 90% of Afghanistan and lay claim to be the government in those areas. These claims are challenged on various grounds including their intensely conservative, religious-based views on the rights of individuals, especially women; their uneven performance in making and implementing decisions; and their weak capacity to formulate coherent long-term policies for the benefit of the people they govern. In this currently unstable situation, local communities must play a more active role in their own governance interests.

The emphasis must be to build on the strengths of the existing Afghan social structures and on indigenous support and solidarity mechanisms. Strong, inclusive community groups and networks can be effective in improving the management of natural resources and the maintenance of community infrastructure, managing micro-finance and savings schemes, facilitating innovation and sharing of knowledge and ultimately influencing policies at different levels. Cohesive community groups can also provide a safety net for their poor and vulnerable members through helping them cope with shocks and ensuring survival and dignity during periods of crisis and extreme insecurity.

3.2 THE HELMAND SCENE

3.2.1 Base Data

The analysis of the current situation in Helmand has been developed using data from the two surveys (Baseline and Socio-economic) commissioned by the HPG to provide accurate current data for the preparation of the Helmand Strategy. Field work for these surveys was undertaken in September-October 1999. The draft Baseline Survey report was published in December 1999 and the Socio-economic Survey report in April 2000.

The Baseline Survey gathered broad-scale data on the Helmand community and agriculture in the province. The Socio-economic Survey was directed at a more detailed understanding of household structures and economics and the interaction between food security and opium production in Helmand. For the Socio-economic Survey an equal sample of 12 villages was selected in each of three significant poppy producing areas plus some parts of adjoining districts within the Boghra canal command area. Using data from the 1998 Afghanistan Opium Poppy Survey, the villages were ranked according to the intensity of opium cultivation measured as the percentage of total agricultural land cultivated with poppy. Within the villages, households were ranked in five economic categories, with 3 respondents drawn from each category. The categories represented the access of the household to resources of land and water and were the same as those used in earlier UNDCP survey work. viz:

Category I — Landless households who are actively engaged as sharecroppers.

Category II — Households who own insufficient land for subsistence and combine activity as owner cultivators and sharecroppers.

Category III — Those with sufficient land for subsistence (owner cultivators).

Category IV — Small landlords who have marginally more than sufficient land for subsistence (owner cultivator and employ one or two sharecroppers).

Category V — Large landlords who employ sharecroppers only and are not directly engaged themselves in production.

3.2.2 Overview

Table 2 sets out the Baseline Survey data for Helmand on the total numbers of families by village and district and total population numbers by sex. The table also includes additional information on the families, whether they are landowners or landless, kuchis and the number of households headed by women. The districts are allocated between north and south, where the irrigation systems are traditional and the larger, formal central irrigation system.

Table 2 Helmand: No of households, composition and land ownership

District	Villages surveyed no	Total house holds	No of persons Male	No of persons Female	Households which are: Land owners	Landless no	Landless %	Kuchi	Female head
Baghni	41	5062	21698	21891	4205	857	16.9	64	377
Baghran	162	8868	41048	41977	6729	2139	24.1	137	377
Kajaki	120	10268	46098	46529	8034	2234	21.8	56	685
Musa Qala	100	18880	84866	88132	13836	5044	26.7	1177	716
Naw Zad	121	13073	59210	62440	8849	4224	32.3	4643	410
Sarban Qala	52	6529	30142	32349	4949	1580	24.2	36	289
Washir	65	3094	13965	14730	2673	421	13.6	77	196
s/tot Northern	661	65774	297027	308048	49275	16499	25.1	6190	3050
Bust	38	6424	28786	30499	4474	1950	30.4	394	678
Marja	93	12337	57539	58374	8591	3746	30.4	5372	497
Nar-e-Ali	64	6886	31340	29020	3646	3240	47.1	176	243
Nahr-e-Saraj	119	11981	52228	53868	7121	4860	40.6	452	283
Nawa Barakzai	55	5907	26114	26746	4215	1692	28.6	154	275
s/tot Central	369	43535	196007	198507	28047	15488	35.6	6548	1976
Garmser	102	6873	31867	32854	3494	3379	49.2	234	319
Khanishin	12	860	4553	4772	537	323	37.6	20	45
s/tot Southern	114	7733	36420	37626	4031	3702	47.9	254	364
Total	1144	117042	529454	544181	81353	35689	30.5	12992	5390

Source: Helmand Baseline Survey 1999, Table 2.1.

Based on the survey data, with 529,000 males and 544,000 females, the total population of Helmand was 1.07 million persons. Of these 605,000 were in the northern districts, 395,000 in the central plains and 74,000 in the southern areas. Population density is low in the south due to hot desert conditions and scarcity of water. Nearly 70% of households owned some land. There were just under 13,000 kuchi families (estimated at 120,000 persons). Nearly 5% of households (5390) were headed by women, though the socio-economic survey reported only 0.5% of women as economically active and almost none as literate.

As discussed in Section 3.1.1, the landless are seen as being at greatest risk of poverty and food insecurity because of their limited or non-access to food producing resources of land and water. Table 2 shows 35,700 landless households in Helmand (30.5%) or 327,000 persons based on average household size across all districts. Sharecropping, where a person with few resources undertakes production on an area of land and shares the output with the owner, is widely practiced in Helmand. This is recognised in the stratified sample of farm households, where Categories I and II are sharecroppers who lease land and Categories IV and V have surplus land which they lease to sharecroppers.

The landless households data are unevenly distributed with Musa Qala (26.7%) and Naw Zad (32.3%) having the highest percentages in the north and Nad-e-Ali (47.1%) and Nahr-e-Saraj (40.6%) in the main irrigation regions. The larger farm size in Nad-e-Ali provides more opportunity for sharefarming. The districts with high landless populations are all significant poppy producing areas. A combination of available opportunities for sharecropping and cash employment in poppy weeding and harvesting have attracted landless people to these areas.

3.2.3 Household Structure

The households in the socio-economic survey averaged 12.7 persons/household, with an average of 2 to 3 families/household. This was somewhat higher than the same data for the Baseline Survey (9.2 persons/household). The economically active males, included 94% of the 16-45 years group, just over half (54%) of those over 45 years and 19% of the 5-15 years group. Only 5 females (0.5%) aged 16 years or more were reported as economically active.

There was a wide spread of ages among the heads of households. More than half the group (57%) were between 30 and 59 years of age, with a relatively equal spread of numbers in each age decile. A further 35% were between 60 and over 75 years and 7.6% under 30 years. One quarter of the heads-of-households were no longer economically active, broadly equaling all those over 70 and two-thirds of those in the 60-69 age group. All age groups of heads of households were represented in every socio-economic category. Proportionately more were younger in Categories I and II, while the economically inactive proportion rose with increased access to resources (Category 1, 17.5% to Category V 64%).

The dependency ratio for the survey group as a whole was 1:3.56. There were no significant differences in the dependency ratio between districts, but there were differences between economic categories. Category I had the lowest ratio. With Category I having the lowest number of persons/household (10), and with generally younger heads-of-households in Categories I and II, the implication is that Category I includes a proportion of younger families starting out at the foot of the economic ladder. Category V had the highest dependency ratio which can be seen as a reflection of their significantly greater access to economic resources.

Of the adult males over 15 years, 18% were literate and 24% of males in the 5-15 year age were attending school. There were only 14 literate women. No females were recorded as attending school or having discontinued school. Only 21% of heads of households were literate with a relatively even spread of educational achievement from primary schooling through to year 12. A few had reached university level and 27% had madrassa schooling. The level of educational achievement was relatively evenly spread between Categories II to V (23-33%), but Category I was significantly lower at 10%. The existence of a small core (10%) of farmers with middle school or higher education indicates a potential resource for the development of extension and community training.

The Socio-economic Survey reported a significant majority (84%) of the survey households living in their own houses. Almost all those who did not, were Category I sharecroppers, where the housing was provided as part of the sharecrop agreement. The principal sources of drinking water were overwhelmingly irrigation canals and kareze, with barely 10% of the population having access to secure wells.

Access to clean water can be linked to the data on deaths and causes of death, which point to some serious community-wide problems. One-fifth of survey households reported at least one death in the previous year, of which 64% were children under 10 years. The principal causes of death cited were malaria (16%), typhoid and cholera (14%), TB, asthma and pneumonia (11%), measles (6%), diarrhoea and amoeba (4%) and war (3.5%).

Expenditure on illness is a major burden. A total of 88% survey households reported spending money on illness in the previous three months. Nearly half of these (46%), were amounts over Afg5 million (US$117), ranging up to amounts exceeding Afg 50 million (US$1170). There was a significant link between high debt levels and high expenditure on illness.

3.2.4 Key Development Issues

.01 Land Use and Cropping Patterns

Data on agricultural land use by survey district is set out in Table 3. The data highlight the differences in land use between the central and northern areas in Helmand, which are largely a function of water availability. In the formal irrigation system of the central plain, 180,000 jeribs (36,000 ha) were used for winter crops (76% total area) and a further 152,500 jeribs (30,500 ha) were used for summer crops (64% total area). In the north, the area under winter crops was 61,100 jeribs (12,220 ha, 44.5% total area) with the summer crop area 29,400 jeribs (5880 ha, 21% total area).

Table 3 Survey area: Land use by district, season and farming method

District	Villages in Survey	Winter (area jerib)				Summer (area jerib)				Total	Grazing land (jerib)
		Cultivated		Uncultivated		cultivated		Uncultivated			
		Irrigated	R'fed	Irrigated	R'fed	Irrigated	R'fed	Irrigated	R'fed		
Musa Qala	100	27138	690	5988	1883	13464	230	23242	1703	39195	1700
Naw Zad	121	33999	6130	51273	3100	15940	0	69402	8660	98307	22100
s/t Northern	221	61137	6820	57261	4983	29404	230	92644	10363	137502	23800
Bust	18	16400	0	8250	0	14300	0	10350	0	24650	0
Marja	93	91158	0	41524	0	70980	0	61414	0	132752	200
Nad-e-Ali	64	59752	0	5641	0	55552	0	10731	0	66396	450
Nahr-e-Saraj	31	12436	0	1371	0	11716	0	2091	0	13866	15
s/t Central	206	179746	0	56804	0	152548	0	84586	0	237664	665
Total	427	240883	6820	114045	4983	181952	230	177230	10363	375166	24465

Source: Helmand Baseline Survey Report 1999, Table 3.1.

The aggregate statistics on irrigation water sources for Helmand mask quite significant differences between districts. The source of water is the real difference between the agricultural systems of the two areas. In the northern areas it is the principal limitation on the pattern of land use. Details are given in Table 4.

Table 4 Survey area: Sources of irrigation water by district

District	Villages surveyed	Total area (jb)	Total area of land (jeribs) irrigated by			
			Canals	Kareze	Springs	Wells
Musa Qala	100	28608	17363	7035	1410	2800
Naw Zad	121	37329	80	33701	1387	2161
s/total Northern	221	65937	17443	40736	2797	4960
% total			26.5	61.8	4.2	7.5
Bust	18	16400	16400	0	0	0
Marja	93	99292	99092	0	0	200
Nad-e-Ali	64	63136	63136	0	0	0
Nahr-e-Saraj	31	12295	12095	200	0	0
s/total Central	206	191123	190723	200	0	200
% total			99.8	0.1		0.1
Total	427	257060	208166	40936	2797	5161

Source: Helmand Baseline Survey 1999, Table 4.1.

In the north, water sources in order of importance are kareze (62%), river diversion (canals 26%), wells (8%) and springs (4%). Naw Zad and Musa Qala also differ in the importance of water sources, with virtually no surface water resources in Naw Zad. Of the 37,300 jerib farmed, 90% is irrigated from kareze, with the balance from springs (4%) and wells (6%). In Musa Qala, the availability of river flows alters the balance with 61% of the 28,600 jerib farmed drawing water from river diversion canals, 25% from kareze, 4% from springs and 10% from wells. Water flows are never high in these northern areas, and are low in the

summer. As a consequence, it is water, not land which is the limiting resource for crop production. This is a significant issue when deciding between wheat and poppy, as poppy is considered to be better able to produce under water-shortage conditions.

By contrast, when the canals of the main irrigation system of the central plain are fully functional, the diversion of the Helmand River through the canal system provides adequate water for developed land within the irrigation area. That is, land is the limiting resource not water. For the 1999 crop season in the survey area, just over half the available irrigable land (95,700 jerib) was double cropped with summer crop following winter crop. As discussed in Section 4.2, double cropping is the key alternative cropping strategy to poppy production, with summer crops such as cotton and peanuts providing both higher incomes and an alternative source of cash, providing markets are available. There is scope for increasing the double cropped area if the system were rehabilitated to improve water flows. The limited water availability in the north means that double cropping is not a viable strategy in this area.

.02 Agricultural Production Problems

Both the Baseline and Socio-economic survey respondents were asked to identify key factors which they saw as limiting agricultural production. Responses are given in Table 5.

Table 5 Survey area: Identified agricultural problems by district

District	Survey villages	Imrp'vd seed	Fert avail	Irrig'n water	Other	Farm power	Crop disease	Insects	Mines	Rate + mice
Musa Qala	100	53	44	76	11	19	30	11	6	0
Naw Zad	121	72	60	114	1	17	13	22	0	1
s/total Northern	221	125	104	190	12	36	43	22	6	1
Ranking		2	3	1	7	5	4	6	8	9
Bust	18	3	3	0	5	0	17	1	0	1
Marja	93	65	49	11	87	22	5	1	1	1
Nad-e-Ali	64	49	55	2	50	35	9	4	0	1
Nahr-e-Saraj	31	28	20	7	8	14	9	7	0	0
s/total Central	206	145	127	20	150	71	40	13	1	3
Ranking		2	3	6	1	4	5	7	9	8
Total	427	270	231	210	162	107	83	35	7	4
Overall rank		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Source: Helmand Baseline Survey 1999, Table 3.2.

The differences between areas as to the most important agricultural problems are significant. While the aggregate data for Helmand shows shortages of improved seed and fertiliser as the first and second ranked problems. However, once the data is disaggregated between the north and central, the order of importance changes. The most important problem in the north is the lack of irrigation water. This is reported by 190 of the 220 villages surveyed (86%) and is 50% ahead of the next ranked problem. Shortages of improved seed and fertiliser were reported by around half the villages, with crop disease reported by only 20% of villages.

The spread of issues is wider in the central region than in the north. The highest ranked problem was 'other issues', which is an amalgam of poor drainage, flooding, salinity and weeds. These are reported by 75% of villages and are a direct consequence of lack of maintenance of the irrigation scheme. 'Other' issues also includes lack of credit which can be linked back to difficulties in obtaining supplies of seed and fertiliser. Shortages of improved seed (70%) and fertiliser (62%) rank higher in the centre than the north. The concern expressed over insufficient farm power (34%) is also a reflection of the larger farm sizes in the central region.

Data on available farm power resources by survey district are given in Table 6.

Table 6 Survey area: Sources of farm power by district

District	No. of villages surveyed	Total arable land (jerib)	Total no. oxen	Av no oxen/ village	Total no. tractors	Av no tractors/ village	Total no threshers	Av no threshers/ village
Northern	221	137502	739	3	552	2	19	.08
Central	206	237664	1041	5	1072	5	132	0.64
Total	427	375166	1780	4	1624	3.8	152	3.49

Source: Helmand Baseline Survey 1999, Table 3.3.

Individual farm areas are larger in the central region than the north, which is reflected in the almost total mechanisation of cultivation in Nad-e-Ali and Marja. Animal power plays little role in production. There were only 156 jeribs in all areas cultivated by animal power compared to 6400 jeribs by tractor.

Three-quarters of all land is cultivated with hired tractors. Average area cultivated was 5-6 jeribs for Categories I-III, with an average period of 11-13 days, or 2.2 jeribs/tractor day. Category IV farmers with larger farms cultivated 9 jeribs over 20 days. Principal sources of hired tractors were other villagers (48%) and outside the village (44%), the balance coming from relatives or landlords. Average price paid for tractor hire was Afs 218618/hour ($5).

.03 Farm Labour

The Socio-economic Survey reports farm labour in the survey households as exclusively male, with an average use of 2.6 persons/household, or 4.8 jeribs/worker. Almost all (91%) households across all categories hired labour. A few households (1.5%) indicated that children were needed as farm labour, while 75% specifically said that children were not withdrawn from school for farm work. A further 24% of households said that there was no school in their village from which the children could be withdrawn for farm work. The main months cited when children were needed were March and May, which indicates poppy weeding and harvesting as the activities for which the children were used.

Poppy cultivation was the major reason for hiring labour. Weeding required an average of 1.07 workers/jerib over 19 days and harvesting 1.33 workers over 15 days. This is effectively 20 worker days/jerib of hired labour of each task. Labour cost included provision of food while on the job, at a cost of some Afs30,000 to Afs40,000 which added around 30% to the daily cost of labour. Competition for labour significantly raises the wage rate (excluding food) from around Afs90,000/day for weeding to Afs260,000/day for harvesting.

It is possible to make some broad estimates of total non-household employment generated by poppy production. The Socio-economic Survey estimated that the 2540 jerib of poppy cultivated by the survey households generated 102,000 mandays of paid labour which represented employment for 1016 people weeding and 2540 for harvesting. Total wage and food cost for these workers would be of the order of Afs22.3 billion or US$522,000. Poppy production was the only significant wage employment opportunity in the survey households. Of the outside workers employed, 20% were from the village or district of the reporting household, while 31% came from the region and 18% from outside the region.

.04 Sale of Produce

Nearly all households in the Socio-economic Survey population sold some produce in the previous year, regardless of geographic location or category. Opium was overwhelmingly the major item sold. Almost all households (351 out of 370, 95%) sold opium, while the next largest commodity (almonds) were sold by only 18 households and wheat by eight. Opium generated 98% of farm gross sale income. Obviously in the absence of opium, production patterns and sales would necessarily be different. However, under current conditions households are overwhelmingly dependent on opium for their non-food income.

Category I households had no surplus wheat to sell. There were a small number of wheat sales with the volume and value increasing from Category II to IV households. With the exception of almonds and watermelon, most other reported sales appeared to be randomly distributed by economic category, presumably representing either opportunistic surpluses or the need to generate some cash.

It would appear that the high relative value of opium has shifted the balance of land allocation to opium production. Of the 4390 jerib under winter crop, less than half (1850 jerib, 42%) was used for the production of wheat, which is the principal food crop. As a result, many farm households do not generate sufficient food for themselves.

Only 20% of respondents were able to say that their household produced enough wheat to feed itself during the current (1999) cropping year. The proportions not food self-sufficient were highest in the sharecropper Category I and fell as access to resources increased. It is important to note that more than half (58%) of the well-to-do category (IV) and 22% of the wealthiest category (V) did not produce sufficient wheat to feed their families for a year, confirming that a high proportion of the land was used for opium. The categories with limited land areas (I-III) could only supply their own food for five months, rising to eight months for Category V. The proportions of those never food self-sufficient were highest in the poorer economic categories.

.05 Use of Credit

A significant number of survey households use credit. The Socio-economic Survey data showed 245 households out of 370 (66%) which took out a loan in the previous 12 months. The analysis of the use of credit shows a pronounced weighting towards social rather than economic uses. Data is provided in Table 7.

Table 7 Use of credit by farmer economic status

H'hold Economic Category	Use of Credit							Total by Category	
	Fertiliser and seed	Hired labour	Invest-ment	Food	Clothes	Marriage	Medical treatment		
	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	percent
I	21	24	2	66	6	8	10	137	33.7
II	20	15	6	37	5	10	10	103	25.3
III	10	14	11	44	11	8	13	111	27.3
IV	11	9	7	14	2	4	4	51	12.5
V	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	5	1.2
Total	62	62	26	163	26	31	37	407	100.0
% total	15.2	15.2	6.4	40.0	6.4	7.6	9.1	100.0	

Source: Helmand Socio-economic Survey 2000, Table 33.

Two-thirds of borrowing events were for social needs such as food, clothing, medical treatment and marriage, whereas production needs such as fertiliser, seed, hired labour and capital investment, accounted for only one-third of borrowing events. Many households (especially poorer households) make a number of smaller borrowings over time, rather than attempt to secure all their needs with one sum.

The borrowings for social needs (food, clothing, medical treatment and marriage) were proportionately highest among the Category I to III households, but not exclusively so. Even Category V households reported borrowing to purchase food and clothes. Virtually all households (359) reported using fertiliser, however only 62 reported using credit to obtain it. There were 120 households which said that shortage of cash was the principal reason for not using more fertiliser (or using less than would otherwise be used). This suggests that the high price premium for credit purchases of these items is a distinct disincentive for risk-

averse farmers. Shopkeepers and landlords provide the bulk of the credit used for the purchase of agricultural inputs, food and clothes. Credit for food purchases can come from family and friends, who are also the major source of credit for marriage, medical treatment and hired labour.

The range of amounts borrowed is very wide, with the majority of loans between the bands of less than Afs0.5 million and Afs30-40 million. There were equal numbers (53/52) in the two median groups of Afs5.1-10 million and Afs 10.1-20 million, with average loan values of Afs 8.8 million (US$205) and Afs17.7 million (US$415). There are however, a large group of households (43) with loans in the bracket greater than Afs60 million. Here the average loan value is Afs210 million (US$4910). These large borrowings can be found in all socio-economic categories except the wealthiest (Category V) who are net lenders to other groups.

Table 8 sets out the data on average size of loans by economic category. As might be expected, the average size of loan increases with increasing access to resources. To indicate the economic pressure to grow opium, the average size of loan is converted to an equivalent amount of dry opium.[24] On a long-term basis the estimated amount may be somewhat high as the base price used (July 1999) was quite low.

Table 8 Average size of loans (Afs million/US$ and kg opium) by economic category

Economic Category	Afs million	US$	Av loan as kg opium
I	29.7	695	18
II	57.0	1333	35
III	65.7	1536	40
IV	76.2	1782	47
V	5.0	117	3

Source: Socio-economic Survey 2000, Tables 36 and 37.

One-third of landlords (26) in the Socio-economic Survey, provided credit to sharecroppers. Of this, 66% was for agricultural activities, fertiliser, seed labor and investment. The balance was mostly for food. Of the Category IV and V households who engaged sharecroppers (71), nearly 70% had either one (31, 44%) or two (18, 25%) sharecroppers. At the other end of the scale there were six households who had between 6 and 10 sharecroppers and two with more than 11. The greatest number of landlords were in the northern areas and Nad-e-Ali, reflecting the private ownership of water sources in the north and the larger irrigation blocks in Nad-e-Ali. Half the area used by sharecroppers was under poppy production. Nearly one quarter (23%) was under wheat and the balance under a range of summer crops, predominantly maize (17%) and cotton (7%). Details are given in Table 9.

Table 9 Total area of sharecropped land used by crop by district (jerib)

District	Total	Wheat	Poppy	Cotton	Maize	Tobacco	Peanuts	Mung bean	Water melon	Radish
Musa Qala	515	89	318	0	107	1				
Naw Zad	574	75	385	0	106			6		2
Bust	158	30	44	21	63					
Marja	274	94	89	60	27				4	
Nad-e-Ali	492	176	175	73	17		30		21	
Nahr-e-Saraj	105	20	53	0	32					
Total	2118	484	1064	154	352	1	30	6	25	2
% total	100.0	22.9	50.2	7.3	16.6	0.0	1.4	0.3	1.2	0.1

Source: Socio-economic Survey 2000, Table 40.

24 Conversion based on a value of $36/kg as at July 1999.

1 SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

.01 The preparation of the Helmand Strategy is part of the common programming process for inter-agency cooperation which commenced at Ashgebad in January 1977. This is part of the larger Strategic Framework process to enhance the synergy between the UN's political strategy in Afghanistan and international assistance activities.

.02 Common programming is the mechanism for establishing the assistance community's priorities, programmes and projects, based on agreed goals, principles and the expressed needs of Afghans. In the case of Helmand province, the reduction of opium poppy production is the cross-cutting priority for the assistance community.

.03 The active membership of the Helmand Planning Group (HPG) comprises ten UN agencies and six Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). There are an additional eleven agencies and NGOs who maintain an interest in its activities.

.04 Helmand is located in south-western Afghanistan. With some 200,000 ha of irrigated land it is a significant agricultural production area. In the mountain foothills of northern Helmand agriculture is based largely on traditional irrigation systems, while there is a large 'modern' canal-based irrigation system in the central region. Helmand is the largest opium poppy producing area in Afghanistan, with nearly 50% of national output.

.05 The principal development issues for Afghanistan are poverty alleviation, social development and governance. In the Helmand context, these issues cover food security and the capacity to be economically free through work; the right of families to have social and economic independence, especially health care and education; and the creation of an environment in which individuals and communities can work together for their mutual wellbeing.

THE HELMAND SCENE

.06 To quantify the situation in Helmand particularly in respect of opium production, the HPG commissioned a Baseline Survey and a Socio-economic Survey. The survey field work was carried out in September-October 1999, with the draft reports issued in December 1999 and April 2000 respectively. The two reports provide a detailed picture of the community situation and the impact of opium.

.07 Total population of Helmand was estimated at 117,000 families (1.07 million persons), nearly 70% of whom owned at least some land. Nearly 5% of households were headed by women, though only 0.5% of women were reported as economically active. Poverty and food insecurity were major issues, with 30% of families being landless. The proportion of landless were highest in the major poppy growing areas, suggesting a direct link between opium production and employment opportunities.

.08 Households are large (av 12.7 persons) with 2-3 families. The majority live in their own houses with the balance in job-related housing. The heads of households cover a wide spread of ages, from under 30 to over 75 years. Of the adult males over 15 years, 18% were literate, while 21% of heads of households were literate with education level evenly spread from primary to year 12. The existence of a small core (10%) with middle school or higher education indicates a potential resource for extension activities. Just over 1% of women were literate and no girls were recorded as receiving schooling.

4 OPIUM POPPY: SYMPTOM NOT CAUSE

4.1 OPIUM POPPY IN HELMAND

4.1.1 Production Levels

Opium poppy is a traditional crop in Afghanistan. It has been grown in small plots and widely used in many parts of the country as the only available medicine for a range of ailments. It has also long been a part of the farming system in high altitude hardship areas where it plays a role in helping people cope with the endemic winter food shortages.

The expansion of poppy production can be linked to successive failures of governance. The two most important were the Soviet invasion in 1979 and the period of the commanders (1992-96) which followed the fall of the Najibullah government. As a consequence of the collapse of the civil economy, opium has become a means of exchange, providing access to essential resources. Despite substantial support from the international community, many Afghan families have found that the difficulties of subsistence farming in a ruined economy have forced them into new survival strategies. The growing of opium is one of the few, if not the only option which will provide access to land and credit and generate cash income.

The UNDCP surveys show that total planted area in Afghanistan was relatively stable at between 50-60,000 ha for the four years 1995-98. However following a poor 1998 season, 1999 saw a significant surge, with an increase of over 40% in planted area to 91,000 ha. Also significant was the number of new poppy producing provinces in the eastern region and the shift in plantings in the last two years across the Hindu Kush into a number of northern provinces.

Helmand is the largest opium poppy growing area in Afghanistan. Average area planted over the past six years was 48% of total national area, with a range from 41% to 55%. The importance of directing poppy-reduction efforts to Helmand is indicated by the fact that a reduction of 10% in Helmand output would be greater than the elimination of poppy in the 11 smallest recorded provinces (Kapisa to Baghlan). Overall, the south-west accounted for 61% of all areas planted to poppy in 1999. (Helmand 49%, Oruzgan, 5% and Qandahar 7%). Details of Helmand production by district and year are given in Table 10 and are shown in both Maps 1 and 2.

Table 10 Helmand: Area under opium poppy cultivation by district 1994-99 (ha)

District	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1999 %
Baghran	n/a	2519	1267	2754	2910	2794	6.3
Bust	2256	885	1054	1325	1869	2528	5.7
Garmser	786	725	942	1993	1205	2643	5.9
Kajaki	979	4087	2814	3904	3959	5746	12.9
Musa Qala	1154	5137	3924	4360	5574	7013	15.7
Nad-e-Ali	12529	5983	4035	5102	5156	8667	19.5
Nahr-e-Saraj	590	4716	4309	4807	2426	4041	9.1
Naw Zad	2345	2799	3596	1585	3605	4424	9.9
Nawa Barakzai	6047	1254	505	722	1150	2581	5.8
Sarban Qala	2866	973	1909	1971	1734	2646	5.9
Washir	n/a	676	555	877	1084	1469	3.3
Total	29552	29754	24910	29400	30672	44552	100.0
Annual increase %		0.7	-16.3	18.0	4.3	45.3	

Source: UNDCP Afghanistan Opium Poppy Survey 1999 Annex B: Statistics, p.19.

In Helmand, average yields of fresh opium resin are estimated at 12-14kg/jerib[25]. There is a weight loss of 50% in converting fresh resin to dry opium, so average yields of dry opium equivalent are 6-7kg/jerib, or 30-35kg/ha. Assuming a more conservative figure of 25kg/ha for overall yield, the total output in 1998 would have been 767 tonnes and 1,100 tonnes in 1999. Average price of dry opium at harvest time (April-May) in 1998 was $ 38/kg, though by July it has risen to $ 49/kg and remained around $ 55/kg and higher for the next 12 months. The trend was reversed by the 1999 harvest. Prices fell below $ 60 in March and were $ 43-$ 45 in April-May. From there they fell steadily to $ 37/kg in July and to $ 31-$ 33 for much of the rest of the year. Using a conservative average figure of $ 40/kg, the farm-gate value of opium produced in Helmand is estimated at $ 31 million in 1998 and $ 44 million in 1999.

Poppy production is widespread. The largest producing district, Nad-e-Ali is part of the large-scale formal irrigation scheme while the next two, Musa Qala and Kajaki are traditional irrigation districts in the northern foothills. As can be seen from the data from the Socio-economic Survey shown in Table 11, poppy production is a higher proportion of agricultural land use in the north (70%) than in central Helmand (47%).

Table 11 Production and value of principal winter field crops by region 1999

Crop	Total area cultiv Irrigated jerib	Rainfed jerib	Average irrigated area (jerib) by economic category I	II	III	IV	V	Total harvest tonnes	Av yield fresh kg/jerib	Price Afs/kg	Price US$/kg	Gross Value US$
1. Poppy												
Northern	1493	0	6	7	4	16	0	19.8	13	1572944	36.8	730324
Central	1047	0	6	7	7	11	0	15.1	14	1571756	36.8	553663
Total	2540 .	0	6	7	5	14	0	34.9	14	1572494	36.8	1284075
2. Wheat										Afs/mann	$/mann	
Northern	658	16	4	4	4	12	0	52.9	365	59297	1.4	73384
Central	1192	0	7	10	8	17	0	123.5	468	46169	1.0	133406
Total	1850	16	6	6	6	15	0	176.4	432	52733	1.2	217634

Source: Socio-economic Survey, Table 13.

4.1.2 The Production Pathway

Those involved in poppy production form a large and diverse group. Producers include large landowners, owner-farmers and the landless, who farm as tenants or sharecroppers or who find work wherever they can. Production also involves a large body of itinerant labourers who do much of the harvesting. The mobility and experience of this last group, and their skill in production and harvesting have a significant influence on the movement of poppy production into new areas.[26] The marketing pathway may include large dealers, professional traders, local shopkeepers, farmers, or itinerant speculators.

Table 12 sets out a hierarchy of the various groups which can be found in the producing and trading pathway. The classification is stylised and none of the groups are mutually exclusive, nor rigorously defined. A person may belong in several of the categories simultaneously. He may be a small-scale farmer who goes itinerant harvesting for a few weeks every year and then takes his share of the production and that of some friends to sell at a distant location. He may be a self-sufficient owner-farmer or a local shopkeeper who also lends money to sharecroppers and acts as a part-time trader after recovering his loans as opium.

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25 Data on yields and prices supplied by UNDCP.

26 Mansfield, David, *An Analysis of the process of Expansion of Opium Poppy Cultivation to New Districts in Afghanistan*, Strategic Study #1, June 1998. pp.8-9 and *Access to Labour: The Role of Opium in the Livelihood Strategies of Itinerant Harvesters working in Helmand Province, Afghanistan*, Strategic Study #4, June 1999. pp.13-15.

Table 12 Stylised economic status of poppy producers by production group

Group	Own Land	Surplus land	Food self-sufficient	Income surplus	Labour	Capital	Poppy dependent
1. Production							
Off-farm landlord	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Hired	Surplus	No
Owner-farmer landlord	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Self+hired	Surplus	No
Owner-farmer	Yes	No	Yes	Marginal	Self	Marginal	No
Small farmer/sharecropper	Yes	No	Marginal/No	No	Surplus	Deficit	Marginal
Sharecropper	No	No	No	No	Surplus	Deficit	Yes
Itinerant harvester	Not locally	No	No/marginal	No	Surplus	Deficit	Yes
2. Marketing							
Labourer/traders	No	No	No	No	Surplus	Deficit	Yes
Farmer/traders		No	Marginal	Marginal	Surplus	Marginal	Yes
Local shopkeepers	N/A		Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No
Large traders	N/A		Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes

Source: Strategy preparation consultant.

In Table 12, each of the groups is ranked against a series of criteria which may affect their attitude to poppy production, particularly their ability to remain economically independent of the opium regime. The assessment of any of the groups being independent from opium is subjective and is based on the situation described in detail in the UNDCP Strategic Reports, Nos 1-4.[27] Data from the Socio-economic Survey highlights the dominant role of income generated by opium across all producer categories.

Currently in Afghanistan, agricultural production takes place in an environment where much of the irrigation infrastructure is in poor condition with little regular maintenance. Markets for outputs are at best uneven and often non-existent. There is little by way of private capital and no formal system providing credit. Where credit is available, there are no controls to influence the behaviour of lenders or to protect the position of borrowers. Households in the Socio-economic Survey reported paying 25% to 50% price premiums for fertiliser bought on credit compared to the open market price. The accumulation of capital is always difficult for poor people and in an environment of high inflation, non-monetary forms of savings are preferred. For those who have fallen below the economic independence line, producing opium offers one of, if not the only option to obtain credit, create savings, gain access to land and a cash income with which to feed a family.

As with the producers, the groups in the marketing pathway are not mutually exclusive, neither are they rigorously defined. There is a correlation between providing credit and acting as a trader, but this is not a rigorous linkage. Credit could equally come from the larger landowners to their sharecroppers, who then find that they are obliged to grow poppy to repay the loan. Whether the landowner is indifferent to the sharecropper growing poppy or not, both know that only poppy will produce sufficient income to meet the debt.

4.2 POPPY-RELATED ISSUES

The situation outlined in Section 4.1.2 above, highlights a number of issues which are relevant to a strategic approach to the reduction of poppy production. These include: (i) the place of poppy production in the farming system; (ii) access for farmers, especially poor farmers, to land and water and the size of available areas of land; (iii) utilisation of resources, especially water and labour; (iv) access to credit and the monetisation of opium; and (v) the social attitudes to the production and use of drugs. There are significant inter-linkages between the issues, each of which is briefly discussed below.

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27 Mansfield, David, op. cit. Strategic Studies #1 and #4 and *The Dynamics of the Farmgate Opium Trade and the Coping Strategies of Opium Traders*, Strategic Study #2, October 1998 and *The Role of Opium as a source of Informal Credit*, Strategic Study #3, Jan 1999.

4.2.1 Place of Poppy in the Farming System

The farming system for the district of Nad-e-Ali in Helmand province is described in the Afghanistan Agricultural Survey[28] and is based on the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) Agricultural Survey 1990.[29] Significantly, in 1990 the SCA study reported the area planted to poppy in Nad-e-Ali as utilising between 8% to 15% to of the area planted to wheat, with the larger farms showing the smaller percentage. The 1999 Socio-economic Survey data show the same range of crops as being grown, but with the area planted to poppy now being 85% to 90% of the wheat area with the increase gained by reducing wheat production. The summer cropped area remained constant over the ten year period at 40-50% of the winter area.

The large shift in winter cropped area at the expense of wheat production is reflected in the fact that 58% of households in Nad-e-Ali were not food self-sufficient. This was not just a function of insufficient land, as the group included 26% of households in Categories III-V, who by definition, had adequate or surplus land for their own needs.

Successful farming in Helmand is dependent on the ability to double crop. Profitability is a function of the intensity of land use with small farms averaging a cropping intensity factor of 1.84, medium farms 1.66 and large farms 1.5. Double cropping is dependent on a reliable supply of irrigation water and an adequate supply of labour. When the Helmand scheme was first planned, the intention was that its relatively large farms would create surplus production of food and industrial crops to feed the cities and generate employment and exports. Without markets for the sale of this level of output, farmers must find other options to use their land.

Farmers are also faced with the problem that water supply is inadequate and in many places drainage is poor to very poor. This has an adverse affect on yields, particularly of improved varieties. Poppy becomes the ideal replacement crop for farmers faced with the need for credit for farm inputs, limited water supply and poor markets for alternative crops. Poppy is not a new crop to Helmand. The 1990 farming systems study comments 'Poppy, which is planted by 53% of farmers has increased its acreage dramatically in the last few years and is a major cash crop.'[30]

The high proportion of landless families suggests that there should be adequate casual labour for industrial crops such as cotton, however markets are virtually non-existent. Resolving this problem is a difficult matter, as there are problems of economies of scale. Significant investment is required once the processing of industrial crops such as cotton and oilseeds moves above the cottage level. The issue is not just one of sufficient production to warrant investment in processing capacity. Civil order and a legal system are required to protect the investment and a sufficiently long-term time horizon to recover the cost. These prerequisites are not currently in place in the current Helmand scene.

Some current data on land use are summarised in Table 13. The table shows total irrigated area by district or canal, divided between the informal and formal (large-scale) systems. Also shown is the percentage of the total area which was irrigated in 1998 and the proportions of this used for wheat and for other crops. The total number of farmers in each area is also given which allows the calculation of total irrigable area and actual area irrigated per farmer.

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[28] Schelhas, Bernard. 1997. *Farming Systems Report*, in *Afghanistan Agricultural Strategy*, FAO Rome, Jan 1997, p14.

[29] Gul, Azam, *et al.* 1992. *Farming Systems of Nad Ali, Helmand*. Agricultural Survey of Afghanistan, Fifteenth Report, Part VI, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Peshawar August 1992. p.7 *et seq.*

[30] Gul, Azam, *et al.* op.cit.

Table 13 Summary land use data, Helmand Irrigation Scheme 1998

Location	Irrigated area ha	Cultivated1998 area ha	%	Irrigated land use Wheat ha	%	Other ha	No of farmers	Area/farmer Total ha	Cultiv ha
Informal system									
subtotal	46573	19846	43	12678	63.9	7168	13063	3.57	3.57
Musa Qala	10946	n/a		n/a		n/a	5880	1.86	
Zamindawar kareze	6048	n/a		n/a		n/a	2849	2.12	
Naw Zad kareze	19747	n/a		n/a		n/a	5736	3.44	
Total Informal	83314						27528	3.03	
Formal System									
Boghra Canal	64845	57190	88	26090	45.6	31100	14000	4.63	4.09
Darweshan Canal	16661	12868	77	7646	59.4	5222	9171	1.82	1.40
Saraj Canal	17851	5906	33	4154	70.3	1752	4330	4.12	1.36
Total Formal	99357	75964	76	37890	49.9	38074	27501	3.61	2.76
Total	182671	95810	52	50568	52.8	45242	55029	3.32	

Source: Helmand Valley Authority 1998, in FAO Back-to-office report, S Sharif Shobair, April 1988.

The data highlight the low proportion of irrigable land in some districts which was actually used in the 1998 season. While Kajaki and Nahr-e-Saraj and the Bogrha Canal area all show high proportions of irrigated land use (88-92%), the Darweshan Canal has 77% utilisation of irrigable land and no other district has more than 34% ranging down to 14%. These low water availability areas total 28% of the Helmand irrigation area and highlight the impact of the problems of canal operation and maintaining water flows for irrigation.

Poppy plays three distinct roles in the farming system: (i) it is a cash rather than subsistence crop; (ii) it is relatively drought-resistant, so that with limited water availability it will generate high marginal returns on available water; and (iii) it serves as a break crop in the rotation, providing an economic means for rigorous weed control. Many farmers lease out weedy fields with the benefit that the sharefarmer will pay to clean-up their weed problem.

Various reasons can be identified for the apparent trebling of area cropped to poppy in the past nine years. Significant among these would be: (i) defensive measures against the declining availability of water as a result of the failure to maintain the large-scale structures and canals of the Helmand irrigation scheme, coupled with increasing drainage problems leading to increasing salinisation and reduced yields of the major food crops; (ii) poor or non-existent markets for alternative cash crops such as cotton; (iii) the willingness to grow poppy giving landless farmers the opportunity to gain access to land and water and thereby turn their available labour into food and income; and (iv) the opportunity to generate cash income for the relatively abundant supply of labour from within the districts and beyond.

Restoring the capacity to reliably double crop irrigated land is the strategic intervention with the greatest long-run potential to reduce poppy production, together with the provision of adequately priced markets for industrial crops such as cotton. Restoring double cropping capacity will require major renovations to the water delivery and drainage systems and is a high-cost, long-term intervention. Some simpler strategic interventions which would have an impact on all classes of farmers include: (i) training farmers in more efficient water-use; (ii) the examination of alternative weed control options; and (iii) improving soil conditions and drainage which are currently seen to be benefits from poppy production.

4.2.2 Access to Land and Water

In a country of subsistence farmers where over 80% of all families grow their own food, access to farming land is a prerequisite for survival. Land ownership is not evenly distributed. As a consequence, in most areas there is long established and well understood

system whereby the larger landowners lease land to tenants, or employ labourers to produce the crop, with payment based on an agreed share of the crop. (See Section 3.2.2).

There are a significant number of sharecroppers in the central region. Between 1953 and 1971 general farm size allocated to settlers on the Helmand irrigation scheme was around 6.0 ha (30 jeribs), which is large by Afghan standards. Farms were large so that production exceeded the needs of the farming household and the surplus food and industrial crop output could be sold to feed the cities and generate employment and exports. Individual farms were larger than could be operated by one family, so the owner would sharecrop the balance.

In the Socio-economic Survey, Category IV and V households were19% of the total, but owned 64% of the land area. All engaged sharecroppers, with nearly 70% of landlord households having either one (44%) or two (25%), while at the other end of the scale there were 8.5% with between 6 and 10 and 3% with more than 11 sharecroppers. The greatest number of landlord households were in the northern areas and Nad-e-Ali, which reflected the private ownership of water sources in the north and the larger irrigation blocks in Nad-e-Ali. Details are given in Table 14.

Table 14 Distribution of landlords and sharecroppers by number and district

Sharecroppers per farmer	Number of Landlords by number of sharecroppers engaged						Total	
	Musa Qala	Naw Zad	Marja	Nad-e-Ali	Bust	Nahr-e-Saraj		
	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	%
1	11	11	3	5	0	1	31	43.7
2	6	2	1	5	2	2	18	25.4
3-4	4	0	3	6	0	1	14	19.7
6-10	0	3	1	2	0	0	6	8.5
11+	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2.8
Total	22	17	8	18	2	4	71	100.0
% total	31.0	23.9	11.3	25.4	2.8	5.6	100.0	

Source: Socio-economic Survey, 2000. Table 39.

Half the area cropped by sharecroppers was under poppy production. Nearly one quarter (23%) was under wheat and the balance under a range of summer crops, predominantly maize (17%) and cotton (7%). Details are given in Table 15.

Table 15 Total area of sharecropped land used by crop by district (jerib)

District	Total	Wheat	Poppy	Cotton	Maize	Tobacco	Peanuts	Mung bean	Water melon	Radish
Musa Qala	515	89	318	0	107	1				
Naw Zad	574	75	385	0	106			6		2
Bust	158	30	44	21	63					
Marja	274	94	89	60	27				4	
Nad-e-Ali	492	176	175	73	17		30		21	
Nahr-e-Saraj	105	20	53	0	32					
Total	2118	484	1064	154	352	1	30	6	25	2
% total	100.0	22.9	50.2	7.3	16.6	0.0	1.4	0.3	1.2	0.1

Source: Socio-economic Survey, 2000. Table 40.

The poppy:wheat ratio on sharefarmed land varies between districts. It is highest in the northern areas and lower in the central region where double (summer) cropping provides a viable economic option to poppy production. In purely local terms, the high proportion of land given to poppy makes the northern areas the least food-secure part of the region.

The Socio-economic Survey data indicates that landowners have a significant role in deciding what sharecroppers will grow. In only 20% of cases are sharecroppers solely

responsible for making production decisions. Two-thirds of landowners consider that they make the decisions, though nearly half the sharecroppers consider the decisions are taken in consultation with the landowner. In either case, the high proportion of land used for poppy production points to the landowners being significantly interested in this crop.

The consequence of this position is clear; any successful poppy-reduction strategy must be implemented with at least the tacit support of the larger landowners. It was the resistance of the rural elite to the attempts of the PDPA government in 1979 to reform land ownership and abolish the debts of the rural poor that led directly to the civil war. Any campaign to improve food security and alleviate poverty as a means of encouraging poppy producers to shift to alternatives will need to engage the support of the rural leadership. Some lateral thinking will be needed to ensure that it is not seen as a direct threat to those who command these resources.

4.2.3 Utilisation of Resources

Water and labour are two resources not well utilised in Afghan agriculture. Water is generally over-used, while labour is underutilised.

While the chronic shortage of working capital may be seen as the currently limiting factor in Afghan agriculture, water is in fact the scarcest resource. Much is made of the problems for production which arise from limited water supplies in the growing period. Considerable evidence exists of regular over-watering and the wasteful use of water. This comes from a combination of poorly leveled fields and a lack of understanding of soil-water-plant relationships.

There are now techniques available which use modern laser-leveling technology for leveling very small fields. Projects implementing these techniques are currently in train in India and Pakistan and provide a proving ground for adapting the technology to Afghan conditions.

The robust tradition of water management through the role of the *mirab* or water bailiff provides considerable scope for increasing output and improving the efficiency of water use through training of *mirabs* and through them, training farmers.

In Afghan farming systems, the economics of labour use are a function of farm size and seasonal activity patterns. The excessive subdivision of land through generations of inheritance have created farm sizes generally too small to keep a farmer and his family gainfully occupied year-round. Apart from the peak activities of weeding and harvesting, there is significant underutilisation of labour. The opportunity to make better use of their own and family labour resources accounts in part for the willingness of many farmers to undertake sharecropping despite the economically demanding nature of most contracts.

When additional land is not available, the obvious strategy is to seek off-farm work, either on other farms or outside agriculture. The problem for most farmers or farm labourers is that under current conditions, such opportunities rarely exist, so that the opportunity cost of labour is effectively zero. One consequence is that farmers rarely attribute an economic value to household labour in the assessment of total costs of agricultural inputs.

Opium poppy production has a high labour demand for weeding and harvesting. Many farmers must hire labour to handle these jobs in a timely manner. Not all labour used in poppy production is local, with large numbers of itinerant harvesters being employed. The evidence from the recent UNDCP surveys is that in the case of Helmand, many of these itinerant harvesters are farmers from other districts making use of a window of opportunity to gain cash employment. Most of those interviewed in the UNDCP survey were young men,

with their own land from which production was insufficient to meet basic family needs.[31] Similar results were found in the socio-economic survey which reported only 20% of hired labour came from within the village or district. The remainder came from the province (26%), the region (31%) and other regions (18%).

These workers take advantage of the seasonal differential between the climatic zones. Many come from the higher country in north Helmand and Ghor where the season is late. They come to the Helmand plain for the weeding season, return home to weed their own crop, return to Helmand for harvesting and then go home to harvest their own wheat and poppy crops. Whilst the income generated from working as an itinerant harvester is considered important, household agricultural production is given priority by those respondents with landholdings. Juggling seasonal gaps in production with available labour has become an important issue for producers. Many now plant several varieties of poppy with differing maturity dates to extend the harvesting period and reduce the peak labour demand.

Itinerant harvesters are typically paid in opium for their work during the harvest, as a share of the final yield. This they generally sell in the local bazaar after harvest. For the majority of respondents, this income was used to purchase basic necessities. This is not surprising, given that subsistence farmers are poorest just before harvest and that their immediate purpose of taking off-farm work was to supplement their limited reserves of food and cash.

Itinerant opium harvesting is emerging as an identifiable skilled occupation. There is evidence that these experienced harvesters are now recognised as a repository of knowledge and skill in poppy production and harvesting and are a major means by which this knowledge is transferred to new producers and new districts. A failure to provide alternative off-farm and non-farm income opportunities for itinerant harvesters may well result in opium poppy cultivation relocating to new areas, the so-called *'balloon effect'*.

The itinerant worker arrangements are entirely economically rational. The Socio-economic Survey estimated that the 2450 jerib cultivated by the 351 poppy producing households, generated over 100,000 man days of work. The aggregate value of the opium produced was estimated at US$662,000, of which just over $500,000 was spent on hired labour. This highlights the importance of poppy production as the principal source of gainful employment. The strategic consequence of any forced reduction in poppy production would be the loss of employment opportunities for poor families and increased poverty and food insecurity. Clearly, for any long-term reduction in poppy production to be successful, it must be accompanied by alternative work opportunities, either as cash employment or food-for-work.

Opium is a labour-intensive crop and as such, its profitability is vulnerable to increases in the cost of hired labour during harvest time. Strategically-timed non-farm work opportunities which directly compete with the periods of weeding and poppy harvest could well have a significant effect on the amount of labour available for poppy production.

4.2.4 Credit and the Monetisation of Opium[32]

The provision of credit through informal, local sources is a traditional practice in Afghanistan. The use of credit is an integral part of livelihood strategies amongst all the socio-economic groups involved in agriculture; landless sharecroppers, owner-farmers and landlords. As shown in Table 16 below, the findings of a recent survey (1998) indicate the extent of borrowings, the principal reasons and debt levels as a proportion of income.

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[31] Mansfield, David. 1999. Strategic Study #4, op. cit. The text which follows is based on this source.

[32] This section is based on UNDCP Strategic Study #3 *The Role of Opium as a Source of Informal Credit*, Mansfield, David. op. cit.

Table 16 Summary of nature and extent of indebtedness by socio-economic group

Socio-economic group	Proportion obtaining credit in previous 12 months	Most frequent reason for obtaining credit	Debt as proportion of av. net income
Landless	95%	(i) food (ii) clothes and medicine (iii) agricultural inputs (iv) repay existing debts	53%
Owner-cultivator	86%	(i) agricultural inputs (ii) clothes and medicine (iii) food	39%
Landlord	72%	(i) agricultural inputs (ii) clothes and medicine (iii) luxury items	22%

Source: Mansfield, David, UNDCP Strategic Study #3, Table 1, p.14.

Correlating the Socio-economic Survey groups with the three groups indicated in Table 16, the Landless equate to Category I, Owner-cultivators equate to Categories II and III, and Landlords to Categories IV and V. The quantification by household economic category of how the credit is used, was given in Table 7 (page 18). This showed that borrowing for production needs such as fertiliser, seed, hired labour and capital investment, accounted for only one-third of borrowing events. The high price premium reported for credit purchases of agricultural inputs (25% to 50%) is a distinct disincentive. Given the importance of fertiliser for alternative crops such as high-yielding wheat varieties, access to non opium-linked credit for fertiliser at appropriate prices would be an important strategic intervention.

Much more use of credit was made for social needs such as food, clothing, medical treatment and marriage. Care should be taken in interpreting this information as the numbers relate to the number of occasions on which a loan is taken out, not to the relative amounts borrowed for the different uses. However, the data does suggest that while non opium-linked credit for agricultural inputs would be an important strategy, it would not resolve the issue of opium-linked credit as a force driving the further production of poppy.

The principal sources of credit and their use are shown in Table 17.

Table 17 Sources and use of credit

Source of Credit	Use of Credit							Total by source	
	Fertiliser + seed	Hired labour	Invest-ment	Food	Clothes	Marriage	Medical treatment		
	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	%
Family/friend	1	20	3	23	7	23	13	90	20.5
Landlord	60	9	5	35	0	2	1	112	25.5
Shopkeeper	30	12	4	68	16	0	0	130	29.6
Trader	11	15	9	34	3	5	8	85	19.4
Others	0	6	5	3	0	1	7	22	5.0
Total by use	102	62	26	163	26	31	29	439	100.0
percent	23.2	14.1	5.9	37.1	5.9	7.1	6.6	100.0	

Source: Socio-economic Survey, 2000. Table 34.

Shopkeepers and landlords are the major sources of credit used for the purchase of agricultural inputs, food and clothes. Credit for food purchases can come from family and friends, who are also the major source of credit for marriage, medical treatment and hired labour. Clearly some borrow from more than one source.

There are a number of ways in which credit can be accessed, including: (i) the advance sale of a fixed amount of agricultural production; (ii) the delayed payment for commodities from shopkeepers or traders; and (iii) interest free loans from extended family members. By using a variety of sources households can spread their liabilities across a range of lenders including family, landlords and commercial traders. In keeping with Islamic principles, none of the informal credit systems are 'interest bearing.' However, while notionally there is no interest, the terms under which loans are made mean that the cost of borrowing generally far exceeds the amount of the initial loan.

The most common type of loan is seasonal credit known as *salaam*, by which money is advanced against the future delivery of a fixed amount of agricultural production. While traditionally given against wheat, it now includes cash crops such as black cumin and opium. The *salaam* system allows traders to acquire commodities such as opium, wheat and black cumin at prices significantly less than their harvest price by fixing the repayment at an arbitrary quantity well in advance of the harvest date. The terms of *salaam* loans generally improve the closer the time of the loan is to harvest, so borrowers tend to delay as long as possible, taking out a series of small loans over a period, rather than larger initial amounts.

The data in Table 16 indicate that almost all landless families borrow money and that they have a proportionately higher level of household debt than those who own land. The landless are also the only group who borrow to repay existing debts. On average, debt levels are more than half annual income, all of which points to the landless sharecroppers as caught in a poverty trap with a cycle of recurring debt.

Salaam loans are seasonal credits against the next harvest and are expected to be repaid promptly as soon as the harvest is gathered. The key repayment strategy for self-sufficient farmers and landlords is to harvest an adequate crop to cover the repayment. Provided the money borrowed is substantially used for agricultural inputs and the yields are reasonable, there should be sufficient to meet seasonal loans and leave some surplus to cover the farmers' needs for the next year. However, the majority of landless sharecroppers borrow for consumption as well as for inputs and it is far from likely that their share of the crop will both cover the loan repayment and leave sufficient food or funds to get through the next year.

The situation becomes more acute when yields are low. Opium yields in the 1997-98 season were poor. The opium survey showed that many borrowers in all social classes had difficulty meeting repayments on *salaam* loans. The evidence is that those with assets such as land were better able to renegotiate their repayments. Those is a weak bargaining position found a larger quantum was required for repayment. The obvious option was to increase poppy production in the next season, to both ensure that the larger quantum could be met and reduce the risk that there would be another shortfall.

The fall-back strategy is off-farm work. Short-term jobs would be sought in non-busy periods for farm work. The opportunities were limited to the collection of firewood, construction work or kareze cleaning. Some have become itinerant harvesters outside their own district. Where additional work is not available the final strategy is to repay the short-term loan by borrowing more under the long-term *anwat* loan system. The terms of *anwat* loans are usually particularly punitive and can lead to significant escalation in the final cost of borrowing. This has significant problems for the most vulnerable.

As a non-perishable, tradeable commodity, raw opium has assumed an additional role as an important source of credit, savings and investment. Labourers are paid in opium and farmers who can afford to hold their production back at harvest time are almost certainly assured that it will increase in value. Traditionally, livestock have been the preferred form of savings for farmers. In the current unstable times, opium is able to replace livestock as a simple form of savings which will retain its value while being able to be held almost indefinitely.

.09 Health statistics are poor, with 20% of households reporting a death in the previous year, of which 65% were under 10 years of age. Expenditure on health is a major burden with 88% of households reporting spending money on illness in the previous three months and significant use of borrowed money to pay for health-related costs. Only 10% of households have access to safe drinking water.

.10 Land use patterns are dictated by irrigation water availability. In the formal irrigation system, 76% of land is used for winter crops and 64% for summer crops. In the north the winter crop area was 45% of available land with 21% under summer crops. Poppy production occupies 70% of winter crop area in the north and 47% in the central region. The most important production problem in the north is lack of water, while in the main irrigation scheme it is poor drainage, flooding and salinity, all of which are a function of poor scheme maintenance. Cultivation is almost totally mechanised in all areas.

.11 Farm labour is exclusively male, with 2.6 men/household handling 4.6 jeribs/man. Poppy production plays a big economic role beyond the producer household. Almost all survey households (91%) employed labour, principally for poppy cultivation. The 2540 jeribs cultivated to poppy by these households generated 102,000 man days of paid labour with wage and food payments exceeding $0.5 million. Only 20% of the workers came from the village or district, with 31% from the region and 18% outside.

.12 Under current conditions, households are overwhelmingly dependent on opium for their non-food income. Almost all the survey households (95%) sold opium, the next biggest commodity being almonds by 5% and wheat 2% of households. The high proportion of land given to opium is highlighted by the fact that only 20% of households were food self-sufficient and even 22% of the wealthiest households were not self-sufficient.

.13 Credit is widely used by households at all economic levels with one-third of borrowing events being for production purposes (fertiliser, seed and wages) and two-thirds for social needs (food, clothes, marriage and medical treatment). Shopkeepers and landlords provide the bulk of the production-linked credit. Inputs sold on credit carry a 25-50% price premium which is a strong disincentive to many poor farmers. Credit for social purposes comes more from family and friends. The average size of loans ranges from US$695 to US$1780 depending on economic category, which is equivalent to 18 to 47kg opium at 1999 prices. Individual loans can be much larger.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

.14 Those involved in poppy production and sale are a large and diverse population from wealthy landowners to landless sharecroppers and itinerant labourers. Different groups have differing reasons for being involved. Interventions to reduce poppy output must be based on an understanding of why the various groups take part.

.15 The issues relevant to a strategic approach to the reduction of poppy production include: (i) the place of poppy production in the farming system; (ii) access for farmers, especially poor farmers, to land and water; (iii) utilisation of resources, especially water and labour; (iv) access to credit and the monetisation of opium; and (v) the social issues and anti-drug tradeoffs. There are significant inter-linkages between the issues.

.16 Successful farming in Helmand relies on being able to double-crop. Profitability is a function of the intensity of land use and the ability to sell the output of industrial crops such as cotton and oilseeds. Farmers in many areas are faced with poor water supply and drainage which limit the intensity of land use to one crop/year and no significant markets for industrial crops. Key interventions will be the rehabilitation and ongoing maintenance of the main irrigation scheme and the revival of agricultural markets.

4.2.5 Social Issues and Anti-Drug Tradeoffs

The production and consumption of drugs is recognised as *haram*, or un-Islamic behaviour. However, in a war ravaged economy with little private capital, few economic activities available and high rates of unemployment and under-employment, the production and sale of opium poppy and marijuana represent one of the few activities a farmer can do to generate an income. In the drug trade survey, the proportion of large traders interviewed who had performed *Haj*, and their protestations that they believed the trade in opium to be un-Islamic, would suggest that economic needs and motivations are given priority over religious strictures.[33]

There is an underlying awareness or perception in the community that the production and sale of drug crops is morally wrong.

New producers generally start with small test crops to feel their way into production. No doubt the principal reason for caution is to minimise the risk of losses with a new crop where the farmer has no experience. One might also speculate that the farmer is also testing his moral courage to do something that he has always considered he would never do.

There is evidence that moral courage is also being tested from the other side, where families find their young men caught up in drug consumption. Evidence from the UNDCP drug user survey points to the economic and social damage being done through the rapid rise in drug consumption in Afghanistan.[34] Informal evidence also suggests serious concerns in many rural families at the spill-over from production to consumption within the local community.

There would seem to be a genuine undercurrent of moral concern which could be marshalled into the anti-drug activities. This is supported by the general community acceptance of the September 1999 Edict from the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar to reduce the area planted to poppy. A campaign of speaking out against drug production and consumption by respected religious and tribal leaders would give some focus to raising community awareness and attitudes. This could be followed at the level of the local mosque by drawing the mullahs into the campaign. Local drug awareness activities could be developed in a similar manner to mine awareness campaigns.

The evidence from the field is that there are strong concerns in many villages at the limited or non-existence of schooling children. Community leaders express genuine agitation that there are no corps of young people being educated to play a future leadership role. It is understood that at least one NGO has been able to establish a community-based tradeoff where they provide village-level education facilities in return for the elimination of poppy production. The districts in which this has been achieved are not big poppy growing areas with an entrenched production system as is found in Helmand. However, the fact that it can be done raises the prospect of an additional tradeoff to run together with alternative crops and market development. The poor health status of the community and the high levels of health-related expenditure and debt strongly suggest that community-level health support would provide a further anti-drug tradeoff.

None of this would be effective if it were run in isolation from on-ground activities which gave farmers some reason to adopt alternative crops and assisted them with their problems of debt, lack of markets and the chronic shortage of capital. What is needed is a unified campaign which deals across the board with the whole range of issues which lead people into the production of opium poppy.

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[33] Mansfield, David. Strategic Study #2, op. cit. p.8.

5 THE HELMAND STRATEGY

5.1 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The Helmand Strategy is being prepared in circumstances where there is no recognised national government of Afghanistan. A large part of the country, particularly the east, south and west is under the control of the Taliban militia. Government in the north of the country is still unstable with ongoing sporadic fighting between the Taliban and the former government.

In common with previous Afghan governments, the Taliban exercise their control mostly in the cities and larger towns with much less impact on daily lives in the rural villages. Past expansion of poppy cultivation can be linked to successive failures of governance. It is important therefore to recognise that the Taliban have now brought a significantly greater degree of civil order to the areas under their control than has been the case for at least ten years. They have demonstrated a willingness to control poppy production in the current season through a structured effort to reduce the planted area by one-third from the 1998-99 levels. These efforts suggest that they may be willing to commit to enforcing ongoing limitations on poppy production, particularly if these were linked to economic and social improvements in the daily life of the affected communities. There appears to be some change in the position of the Taliban on education and improvements in the life of women. However, given their loose decision-making hierarchy, there may well be significant local implementation problems, notwithstanding any agreed position with the leadership.

5.2 OPTIONS FOR ACTION

In deciding on options for action, it is first important to understand why farmers produce opium. The best options are those which address the reasons for poppy production in terms of the alternatives that can be offered, which will change the poppy producing behavior.

Depending on their circumstances, most farmers are risk averse. They are risk minimisers, rather than profit maximisers. This is particularly so for poor farmers, for whom failure may mean starvation. While the production of opium is not necessarily the most profitable option for farmers, under present circumstances it is the most risk averse crop available to them. Opium has the highest degree of certainty because it is easy to sell, it is valued in hard currency and it provides access to credit. The key strategic actions will be those which can raise the certainty of return provided by alternatives to poppy and equal the ease of marketing and access to credit which are the strengths of opium production.

While the decision to plant poppy is an individual one, the Strategy takes the view that an individual is more likely to choose not to plant poppy if this decision is reinforced by general community attitudes. The attitudes of individuals and the community are not always only driven by monetary considerations. Non-monetary social benefits can play a significant part in raising the sense of community wellbeing. Strategic actions can therefore be equally well directed at the community, raising the level of community wellbeing as a tradeoff for reduced opium production. Actions directed at communities must seek to be inclusive of both men and women wherever and whenever possible. Women provide a potent force for change if they can see benefits for their family.

Strategic actions should not focus on government, but rather on the individuals, households and village communities who are the functioning arms of the local (particularly agricultural) economy. The actions must be broad enough to include the local shopkeepers and traders

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[34] Macdonald, David, 1999. *Problem Drug Use in Afghan Communities: An Initial Assessment*. Community Drug Profile #1, UNDCP, Islamabad, September 1999.

who provide the inputs and services for agriculture and the mullahs and the men and women who are at the forefront of public opinion.

Options for action should not be constrained by the current shortage of skilled and competent professionals who can deliver the assistance. In the short- to medium-term many of these will come from the international community. Some of the important strategic actions must be directed at strengthening the capacity for these to come from within the country. The continuing existence of HAVA and the ACU provide a residual framework from which to build a support and delivery structure in Helmand.

The options for action to influence the behavior of individual farmers and to raise the community sense of wellbeing through providing valid alternatives to poppy production are seen to fall in four broad areas. These are to improve:

- food security at the family and community level;
- economic independence through the provision of non opium-linked credit and the development of more robust and reliable agricultural markets;
- social independence by improving community health and education; and
- governance, particularly by the development of community leadership for both men and women in moving community attitudes away from accepting the high degree of dependence on poppy.

A fifth area of action will be the development and implementation of the core planning, monitoring and evaluation activities proposed for the Strategy programme itself.

The encouragement of economic activity through the provision of non opium-linked credit and the involvement of women, will cut across activities in all technical areas. The order in which the range of possible interventions is presented does not imply any particular priority. The selection of actions will be part of the detailed annual planning process and priorities at the local level will be based on survey data and field-level feedback. While some broad judgements are made about the economic viability of some proposals, no attempt is made at economic justification. Many projects could operate at a range of levels depending on the resources available and the extent to which they are linked to other activities.

The approach of the Strategy is to maximise the linkages between the development options, which in turn means between implementing agencies and NGOs, either as implementing partners or in their stand-alone activities. Success will come from addressing the spectrum of economic and social issues related to poppy production, rather than dealing with them on a piecemeal basis. There is no point in reinstating the flow in a canal without dealing with the drainage of the area and ensuring that the farmers who might benefit from increased crop production have markets for their additional output. Small farmers grow poppy because they are caught in a poverty trap from which opium production offers the only option of keeping their creditors at bay and finding the wherewithal to feed their families. Communities recognise that the production and use of drugs are destructive and against religious practice, yet these scruples are overwhelmed by economic necessity. All of these are facets of the one problem and must be addressed collectively if there is to be any chance of success in facing-down the growing issue of drug production in Afghanistan.

5.3 CONSTRAINTS

The constraints of the Strategy are:

- More needs to be known about community structures and the extent to which some of the proposed activities will be accepted by individuals or communities. Detailed

information on poppy production activities has increased significantly in the past two years. The field surveys and strategic studies of UNDCP have greatly enhanced the detailed understanding of farm-level and marketing activities of those involved in poppy production. However, more needs to be understood about the role of opium in the economy of the households and villages and the extent to which alternatives can genuinely provide benefit for all those currently engaged in poppy production. The Strategy will need to work with its member agencies in a continuing programme of data gathering to better understand the problems and how to deal with them.

- The problems for the economic viability of alternative crops arising from poor marketing structures are well recognised. However, while actions can be taken to improve the situation, the constraints remain of poor civil infrastructure such as roads, electricity and the general lack of a predictable legal system to support long-term investment.

- The scale of the problem is a major constraint. There are over 90,000 farm families in Helmand with 230,000 ha of irrigated land. In the 1998-99 season 44,500 ha of this area was committed to poppy production producing opium resin worth in excess of $44 million at the farm-gate. To influence activities on this scale will require careful focus and significant on-ground resources.

- For the Strategy to succeed it must be able to develop and sustain a working relationship with whoever is the administration in south-western region where Helmand is located. At the present time, some 90% of Afghanistan including the south-west, is under the control of the Taliban militia. They have demonstrated a willingness to limit drug production in the region, though their capacity for ongoing and consistent enforcement remains untested. There are indications of change in their previous strict opposition to social development, especially to education and health care for women. The extent to which these changes will persist and be implemented in a consistent manner will have a significant impact on the potential for success of the Strategy.

5.4 ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions in the Strategy are that:

- Most Afghans involved in poppy production will take a positive approach to possible alternatives to opium poppy for production and employment, and to the extent that these alternatives provide them with rational and sustainable options, will be willing to implement the alternatives.

- Access to most of the relevant areas of Afghanistan, both urban and rural, with relatively stable communities will continue to be available to both national and international assistance personnel.

- There will be skilled and competent professionals, both national and international who can work with farmers and rural communities to address the opportunities for alternatives to opium poppy production and to define and implement solutions.

- The Taliban administration will have the capacity to work with the Strategy to develop and implement sound and rational policies for the long-term economic and social development of Helmand province with particular emphasis on the creation of realistic alternatives to opium production, and for the protection of natural resources.

- Within the medium-term, access will improve between regions and between the border regions and their international neighbours, with particular emphasis on support to legal trade, with the benefit flowing through to improved market conditions for farmers.

- There are increasing signs of local capital being invested in the region. Programmes for investment in market development are proposed on the expectation that local capital will be available for investment in marketing and employment creating activities.

5.5 RISKS

The risks associated with the Strategy are:

- **Conditionality linkages:** The implicit assumption in any proposals for poppy-related development assistance, is that there is a conditional linkage between the external assistance and a reduction in poppy production. However, communities can make temporary shifts in behavior in order to obtain the benefits of the conditional development, only to revert to the original behavior once the investment is in place. The only sure way to undertake conditional development is where there is a believable long-term enforcement stick as well as the development carrot.

- **Weak enforcement:** The enforcement of the poppy-reduction side of a conditional development arrangement must be the responsibility of government. There is a risk that the existing Taliban administration will lack the capacity or the willingness to sustain a long-term consistent enforcement campaign to reinforce conditional development arrangements.

- **Social resistance:** Two elements of social resistance may be encountered. In 1978 the locally-based rural leadership resisted the unilateral introduction of land reform and the abolition of rural debt by the PDPA Government, which led directly to the civil war. There is a risk that the rural leaders will see proposals for alternative credit sources in a similar light to the debt reforms of 1978 and promote active resistance. Similarly, attempts at poppy reduction may be seen as external interference and provide a focus for some groups to resist the intended impact of the development assistance.

- **Technical failure:** The Helmand irrigation scheme has some inherent technical difficulties with soils and drainage. Refurbishment to the level where these are overcome may require greater investment over longer time periods than donors are likely to be willing to sustain. Even then, the results may still be at risk of falling below anticipated irrigated agriculture productivity levels.

- **Assistance access:** The security situation in Afghanistan has been very uneven in recent years. All UN personnel were withdrawn for some months and currently UK and US nationals are not allowed to travel in-country. The performance of assistance projects has been impeded by these restrictions. There is a risk that these conditions will continue, thereby limiting the potential achievements of any anti-poppy activities.

- **Project management:** The Helmand Initiative envisages a coordinated approach to the issue of poppy production from a large number of agencies and NGOs, each with their own institutional arrangements and management protocols. There will need to be a willing approach by the members of the HPG to implementing coordinated activities.

- **Time frame:** The strategy is about changing the attitudes of individuals and communities towards opium production and the economic and social consequences of doing so. Such a process is at best uneven and always likely to be slow. There is a risk that donors may not be willing to commit themselves to the appropriate time frame to achieve sustainable results.

- **Insufficient funds:** The commitment of donors to funding key initiatives may be insufficient to achieve the results intended.

5.6 STRUCTURE

The proposed Strategy structure is that:

- The Helmand Strategy will be an independent programme 'owned' by the members of the Helmand Planning Group (HPG) who will form the peak decision-making body for the programme.
- Membership of the HPG will be open to any international or national agency, NGO or donor which is interested in providing development activities or assistance in Helmand province. Membership will be either active or observer status. The right to take part in decision making (active membership) will be restricted to those international or national agencies, NGOs or donors which have an active and funded programme in Helmand province, together with donor agencies which have current committed funds to the Helmand Strategy. Observer status will be open to any international or national agency, NGO or donor which has an interest in implementing programmes in Helmand.
- The Helmand Strategy will be established and operated under the control of the UN Coordinator who will be the chairman of the HPG. The Strategy and its funds will be managed by UNDP on a trust fund basis.
- The Strategy will employ only a small core professional staff with experience in project supervision, planning, monitoring and evaluation. The staff will be answerable to the HPG under the supervision of the UN Coordinator. With the exception of designated core planning and monitoring activities, all implementation activities will be undertaken by member agencies and NGOs acting in their normal roles.
- The Strategy document will form the basis of a binding agreement among the members operating in Helmand province. Members will opt-in to the agreement. By committing to the Strategy, members will agree to recognise the decision-making authority of the HPG in setting priorities for action in Helmand and the role of the Programme Manager as the authorised person to supervise and coordinate the implementation of the Strategy in Helmand province.
- Each year the Programme Manager will present a three-year forward programme and a one-year detailed programme to the HPG. Once the programme is agreed it will be binding on members and will be implemented under the supervision of the Programme Manager. Any forward plan will be significantly influenced by available funds. The planning process will be influenced by the willingness of multilateral and bilateral donors to fund the perceived needs of the programme.

5.7 IMPLEMENTATION

The key implementation features of the Strategy are that:

- The Helmand Strategy programme will have three specific areas of responsibility (i) planning; (ii) supervision of implementation; and (iii) monitoring and evaluation.
- Development activities of the Strategy will be implemented by agencies and NGOs in the normal manner consistent with their other activities in Afghanistan. The only difference being that in Helmand, the priorities for action and the actions selected for implementation will be set by the HPG, based on the forward three-year and one-year plans prepared by the Programme Manager in consultation with the members.

- The forward planning process will be consultative with the members of the HPG and make use of a field survey programme undertaken by the Programme Manager as part of the monitoring responsibilities.

- The Programme Manager will be responsible for a regular monitoring programme which will be planned in consultation with the HPG, with the results presented regularly to the HPG.

- Funding for the Strategy will be through a Common Fund and a Trust Fund. Donors will be able to contribute to the Common Fund which will be used for the core activities of the Strategy, or to allocate monies to the Trust Fund earmarked for either specific technical activities or specific agencies or NGOs, or both.

- Arrangements which allow donors the choice of where funds are allocated run the risk of leaving gaps in key areas of the programme. There will need to be genuine coordination between donors to avoid the prospect of distortions arising from uneven allocation of funds. There will also need to be some form of forward commitment by donors to ensure the integrity of the programme and its long-term nature are not compromised.

- The Strategy is about changing people's attitudes which is not a process that can be accomplished quickly. It will need a minimum of four years to have any measurable impact.

- Strategy activities will be phased-in with an early emphasis on field surveys to measure the baseline and identify implementation priorities. November 2000 will be a critical date, as this is the time for planting the next poppy crop. It will be important to have some observable activities on the ground for farmers to take into consideration when deciding what to plant.

- The initial two-year funding is estimated at $8.9 million, including $2.1 million for the core programme, $4.3 million for Programme 1 (Food Security), $1.0 million for Programme 2, (Economic Independence), $1.8 million for Programme 3 (Social Independence) and $0.18 for the initial stages of Programme 4 (Governance).

6 THE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

6.1 OVERVIEW

The Strategy outlines a hierarchy of activities which in combination, can be expected to change the social and economic environment in ways which will positively influence people's attitudes against the production of opium poppy.

There are four broad development themes. Each of these is presented as a programme which includes several objectives (subprogrammes) which are broken down to project-level activities. The programmes and actions are not mutually exclusive or stand-alone elements, but represent a comprehensive, though far from complete, inventory of options to be implemented according to local, district, provincial and regional needs and available resources. Effective implementation will involve considerable interaction between donors, agencies and NGOs in their individual development programmes, objectives and actions. Managing implementation is handled through a fifth programme which is directed at detailed planning and coordination, together with monitoring and evaluation of Strategy outcomes.

Goal: To assist Afghans, particularly the people of Helmand, to build a sustainable future, create economic and social independence and to govern themselves in peace.

Development Programmes: Four development programmes are proposed, covering the broad areas of action to achieve a development-based reduction in poppy production. The programme objectives are to:

(i) enable farmers and families with access to land and water to raise their level of food security through improved agricultural output;

(ii) create economic independence for farmers, their families, the rural landless and women through increased value of agricultural output and opportunities for paid licit work;

(iii) increase social independence of rural families, especially women and children, through access to clean water and improved opportunities for universal health care and education; and

(iv) encourage governance through strengthening community participation in the identification of needs, decision-making and the implementation of activities at the local level.

Management Programme: The fifth programme will facilitate Strategy operation by preparing detailed forward plans, the acquisition of detailed understanding of local problems through surveys and the monitoring and evaluation of Strategy activities.

Immediate: Objectives: Each development objective (programme) has immediate objectives (subprogrammes) representing a group of activities (projects) to bring about the intended results. They include raising agricultural productivity, improving functioning markets, increasing saleable output, increasing capital formation and investment at both household and business level particularly with a view to creating wage employment.

6.2 PROGRAMME 1. FOOD SECURITY

Development Objective To enable farmers and families with access to land and water to raise their level of food security through improved agricultural output.

Subprogramme 1.1 Increased food security through more effective utilisation of resources.

Principal activities will include:

1.1.1 Improving land-use efficiency by raising output per unit of land. Principal activities will include the use of improved varieties of the principal annual crops, fruit and nuts and ensuring that adequate supplies fertilizer are available, as far as possible through normal channels and maximising use of crop rotations.

1.1.2 Improving water-use efficiency by raising the output per unit of irrigation water. This will include training of *wakils*, *mirabs* and farmers in more effective water-use; developing better means of leveling small plots; regular maintenance programmes for main, feeder and field canals and drains.

1.1.3 Implement a micro-area laser leveling scheme to better level small fields for more efficient and effective use of irrigation water.

1.1.4 Implement a locally-based livestock husbandry and productivity extension programme to raise standards of livestock productivity by better regimes of animal husbandry, feeding and breeding.

1.1.5 Implement a locally-based crop and horticultural production extension programme to raise standards of plant husbandry and disease control, particularly using locally relevant methods and to improve standards of harvesting and the presentation of fruit and nuts for market.

1.1.6 Providing better access to land and water resources and improved inputs through a non opium-linked credit system.

Subprogramme 1.2 Agricultural infrastructure

Principal activities will be built around the refurbishment of irrigation schemes, both kareze and the Helmand Irrigation System. Major actions will include;

1.2.1 Survey of kareze villages to quantify kareze problems and to identify the options for action and the prospects for an overall management programme for underground water resources.

1.2.2 Phased implementation of rehabilitation actions defined under 1.2.1.

1.2.3 Refurbishment and restoration of flow rates in the drains for the Boghra canal discharge areas.

1.2.4 Complete the rebuilding of the control structures and gates for the Boghra canal.

1.2.5 Complete the cleaning of the Boghra canal and refurbishment of the offtake structures.

1.2.6 Strengthen the institutional capacity of HAVA and the ACC to maintain the refurbished works on an ongoing basis.

1.2.7 Prepare and implement an ongoing refurbishment programme for the remaining major main canals (Shamalan, Darweshan and Garmser), their river offtakes and their drains.

6.3 PROGRAMME 2. ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

Programme 2. Create economic independence for farmers, their families, the rural landless and women through increased value of agricultural output and opportunities for paid licit work.

Subprogramme 2.1 Provision of non opium-linked credit

Providing alternative non opium-linked credit will be a key element in reducing poppy production. Credit systems will need to be flexible to take account of the differing circumstances of those who need access to credit. Close management will be crucial to success in providing alternative credit. Traders should have access to credit as well as farmers.

2.1.1 Develop a community credit profile to objectively define who needs credit, for what purposes, how much and seasonal timing. Rank the credit categories by capacity to repay and source of funds for repayment.

2.1.2 Design flexible credit programmes to meet the needs of specific groups at all levels, including farmers and women, using methods such as the traditional *beitul-maal* Afghan credit system, small group lending and micro-credit for income generating activities.

2.1.3 Include traders in credit programmes with a view to increasing the availability of good quality fertiliser and agro/veterinary chemicals and in facilitating access for farmers produce to distant profitable markets.

2.1.4 Ensure that all proposed credit systems include sound management of funds and close supervision of borrowers.

Subprogramme 2.2 Development of Agricultural Marketing

Some significant marketing feasibility studies and pilot activities have been undertaken by agencies (UNDCP, UNIDO, FAO) and NGOs (MCI, ADA) in recent years. A number of these were undertaken in Helmand or are relevant to the marketing of Helmand crops. They provide a sound starting point and some institutional background for future work on market development. The approach taken by the Strategy it to concentrate on facilitating private investment in marketing and processing, not investing itself. Facilitation should extend to assisting access to sources of long-term credit for new investment in processing and the improvement of information flows to local communities better balance supply and demand.

2.2.1 Facilitate enhancement of marketing pathways. Work with traders to identify the existing marketing pathways and what actions are needed to develop them to handle larger quantities and deliver higher returns to farmers.

2.2.2 Facilitate the improvement of fruit and nut quality and presentation through training for farmers and traders in quality improvement and packaging.

2.2.3 Facilitate investment in transport and processing using local capital.

.17 Opium poppy plays three distinct roles in the farming system: (i) it is a cash rather than subsistence crop; (ii) it is relatively drought-resistant, so that where there is limited water availability, it will generate high marginal returns on available water; and (iii) it serves as a break crop in the rotation, providing an economic means for rigorous weed control. It has a hard currency value and is easy to sell. Producing poppy is therefore a rational option for farmers faced with the problems described in paragraph .16 above.

.18 The wealthiest 19% of households surveyed owned 64% of the irrigated land and all engaged sharecroppers. For many landless families, access to resources of land and water is dependent on the willingness to sharecrop poppy. Nearly 70% of winter crop area grown by sharecroppers was under poppy, compared to 58% for all farmers and 52% for the non-sharefarmer group. The biggest number of landlords were in the north, due to private ownership of water sources and Nad-e-Ali, with large farm sizes.

.19 The use of seasonal credit is widespread among all socio-economic farmer groups. Opium has become monetised and credit repayment is now denominated in opium, which limits the options of borrowers. Opium has also become a safe form of savings.

.20 The production and consumption of drugs is widely recognised as un-Islamic behaviour However, in the war-ravaged economy of Afghanistan, economic needs and motives are given priority over religious strictures. In additional to alternative crops, the lack of education facilities and serious community health problems provide opportunities for anti-opium linked development tradeoffs. Marshalling the anti-drug sentiment must be part of a multi-faceted approach to limiting poppy production.

THE STRATEGY

.21 The Strategy identifies the opportunities for development assistance activities which provide economically and socially sound reasons for the producers of opium to shift out of poppy production. It seeks to understand why people produce poppy and to address these reasons in terms of alternatives which will change poppy-producing behaviour.

.22 The Strategy framework recognises a number of constraints and makes certain assumptions. It also faces some significant risks, particularly in access, conditionality and the enforcement of programmes.

.23 The Strategy will be 'owned' by the members of the HPG who will form the peak decision-making body for the programme. Decision-making membership will be open to agencies and NGOs which have current committed funds for the Strategy. A small core professional staff will be employed which will be answerable to the HPG under the supervision of the UN Coordinator. With the exception of core planning and monitoring activities, all implementation activities will be undertaken by member agencies and NGOs acting in their normal roles.

.24 Funding will be through a Common Fund and a Trust Fund. Donors will be able to contribute to core activities through the Common Fund or to earmark funds for specific activities or agencies through the Trust Fund.

.25 The Strategy is about changing people's attitudes which is not a process that can be accomplished quickly. It will need a minimum of four years to have any measurable impact.

2.2.4 Encourage government to support and facilitate market development activities.

6.4 PROGRAMME 3. SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Programme 3. Increase social independence of rural families, especially women and children, through access to clean water and improved opportunities for universal health care and education

Subprogramme 3.1 Improved community health

Poor health care, lack of potable water and high levels of disease impose significant social burdens on families in Helmand. The limited range of drugs medical facilities are usually expensive and many families are forced into debt to pay for medical care. Several NGOs (DACCAR, MCI) have strong programmes in these areas in Helmand, particularly in potable water and hygiene, which will provide a strong foundation for ongoing activities. Key interventions proposed to tackle these problems include:

3.1.1 Clean water and household sanitation. NGO operated programmes providing sealed wells and assisting families to install local toilets and bathrooms already exist in Helmand. The Strategy would seek to coordinate this work with other aspects of social and economic development and expand it.

3.1.2 Undertake needs survey in selected communities to identify and quantify priorities for action.

3.1.3 Establish household health and dietary training. The high illiteracy rates of Afghan women means that there is much to be done in raising knowledge of health and dietary needs. The Strategy will identify leading women's opinion-makers among the village communities and train them to work among the women as health awareness trainers.

3.1.4 Establish local area health clinics. The Strategy will establish clinics with particular emphasis on existing programmes such as Mother and Child Health and attaching a demonstration kitchen garden to reinforce approaches to improved diet.

3.1.5 Expand the concept of women's health to include the widest possible range of assistance. Agencies such as UNFPA should be drawn into the Helmand Initiative.

Subprogramme 3.2 Improved community education

The collapse of education throughout Afghanistan appears to be one of the most widely acknowledged problems from prolonged civil war. Those of the current younger generation who have received education have largely done so in cross-border refugee camps and the lack of education facilities is one of the forces mitigating most strongly against refugee return. The country faces a future crisis of leadership without an educated cohort to come forward and operate the civil administration and manage its business affairs. The problem is widely recognised at village level and provides an issue against which to set an agreement to reduce poppy production.

3.2.1 Implement primary schools for boys and girls. Working through key NGOs with experience in the education sector, the Strategy will implement a program of teacher training, resource material development and the operation of village-level schools, with particular emphasis on opening schools in villages where the community agrees to reduce or eliminate poppy production.

3.2.2 Develop a forward programme to include high school education. The short- to medium-term programme for primary education must build-in the development of future capacity to offer high school education as part of the rolling future planning process.

3.2.3 Develop vocational training for local employment. Centres such as Lashkar Gah and employers like HAVA and ACU provide an opportunity for the training of mechanics. Other skills training should include carpentry, building, tinsmithing and business skills in bookkeeping and accountancy.

3.2.4 Implement adult education programmes. Farm extension programmes provide an opportunity to assist the semi-literate through simple structured learning activities. The existing Animal Health and Production Improvement Module (PIHAM) livestock extension programme provides a sound model of adapting adult learning to local circumstances.

6.5 PROGRAMME 4. GOVERNANCE

Programme 4. Encourage good governance through strengthening community participation in the identification of needs, decision-making and the implementation of activities at the local level

Subprogramme 4.1 Community awareness

There is a need to explain the purpose of the Strategy to village communities and to ensure that there is adequate understanding of the benefits available, the likely time period and the trade-offs involved. It is also important that households and individuals come to understand the social and economic penalties that can attach to poppy production and the potential which can accrue from development of non poppy-linked activities. Key actions will include:

4.1.1 Implement poppy-awareness programmes analogous to landmine awareness activities. Respected male and female opinion makers will be trained to conduct poppy awareness activities to highlight health and social problems from opium use.

4.1.2 Facilitate the development of common-interest groups as building blocks for community-based action. The important feature will be, as far as possible, to draw existing groups into activities, rather than form new or rival groups.

Subprogramme 4.2 Community leadership

The success of the Strategy will significantly depend on its ability to co-opt the local male and female leadership as willing participants in its activities. This will not always be easy as in some instances the local leaders may well be active in drug production and trading and to be in a position to frustrate Strategy activities. Resolving these conflicts will be one of the most testing activities of the Strategy implementation.

4.2.1 Establish working links with village leaders to ensure their positive integration into the programme.

4.2.2 Work with, not against, local power structures and regional government.

6.6 PROGRAMME 5. CORE ACTIVITIES

The action programme outlined below covers only the first 6-9 months of the Strategy. The actions are to get the programmes operational, though much of what is initiated in that time

will become ongoing longer-term activities. The draft plans will provide the detailed framework for ongoing programme activity.

5.1 Establish the Helmand Strategy Agreement between the members agencies, NGOs and donors to make the Strategy framework operational.

5.2 Negotiate a Helmand Strategy Framework Agreement with the government to ensure that on both sides there is clarity of understanding and an agreed resolve to pursue the aims of the Strategy.

5.3 Recruit core staff; Strategy Programme Manager (Planning specialist) and Survey and Monitoring specialist, together with senior national professional staff.

5.4 Implement poppy enforcement training programme for government staff to ensure that those involved understand the importance of an even-handed approach, consistency and commitment to the task of enforcing poppy reduction agreements.

5.5 Conduct needs survey to identify action villages. Select and train survey field staff and conduct a needs identification survey in likely action areas.

5.6 Conduct Baseline Survey in selected action areas to provide a yardstick for the appraisal of future project outcomes.

5.7 Prepare draft first year plan and outline draft of rolling three year plan.

7 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

7.1.1 Timing

Timing will be important in the successful implementation of the Helmand Initiative. The Strategy is directed at rural communities and to make an impact, it must recognise the seasonal imperatives which drive farming activities. November 2000 is the time when farmers must make the decision on planting winter crops. This decision will influence the capacity of the household over the next year to feed itself and generate income. The choice will be between wheat and poppy.

The combination of the present drought and the reduced poppy area as a result of the Taliban edict can be expected to increase the financial pressures on farmers later in the year. Yields from the current crops are likely to be lower and while opium prices may rise, farmers will probably have difficulties servicing their debts with smaller incomes. This was certainly the experience following the reduced 1997-98 crop. If output is low, there may also be pressure from some of the larger landowners and dealers to increase production in the 2000-01 year. Lower poppy production may also be paralleled by lower food crop yields, raising prices and increasing distress for the poor. It is a reasonable expectation that farmers would see increased poppy production as a means of coping with these pressures.

It is not clear whether farmers would willingly stabilise production at the lower levels resulting from Mullah Omar's edict. Nor is it clear that they would reduce planted area further in the absence of any indications that there was a likely tradeoff between reduced poppy area and an increase in their wellbeing.

It is considered that a start on a full-scale programme would not be necessary by November to hold the reductions gained in 1999. However some obvious signs to local communities would be essential to show that external assistance in response to reduced poppy production was underway. Such responses would need to be highly public and backed by an agreement with the regional authorities to ensure there was a clear recognition of the linkage between development activities and a long-term reduction in poppy area.

For any programme to have an impact on the area planted to poppy for the 2001 crop, the framework would have to be in place by September 2000. Failure to meet this deadline will delay the impact for at least another year. Delay will also serve to undermine the benefit of the 1999 Edict reducing poppy area, which appears to have largely been implemented through moral persuasion rather than force. If that impetus is lost, then the future prospect of using religious attitudes against poppy production will be weakened.

7.1.2 Participants

The implementation of the Strategy will be undertaken by the various HPG member agencies and NGOs operating within a single overall framework. Each agency or NGO will develop its own implementation plans in conjunction with the professional Strategy team, who will be responsible for planning the priorities and the coordination between agencies and NGOs. Table 18 sets out a generalised activity matrix indicating potential activities and possible roles for the various members of the HPG in terms of the five Strategy programmes. The roles outlined are not definitive or prescriptive and do not imply any particular allocated role or obligation to individual agencies or NGOs. They serve to indicate where skills and experience lie which can be utilised to meet the needs of the Strategy. Much will depend on funding and the available resources which individual agencies or NGOs can marshal for the various tasks.

Table 18 Potential Activity Matrix for HPG members and associates

No	Activity	1. Food Security		2. Econ Indepen'ce		3. Social Indepen'ce		4. Governance		5. Core activities	
		Food Security	Agric Infrastruct	Credit Dev'ment	Agric Markets	Health & Sanitation	Education	Comm'nity awareness	Comm'nity leadership	Core Activities	Govern't liaison
	Agencies										
1	FAO	XXX	XXX		XX						
2	UNDCP	XX	XX	XX	XX			XX	XX		
3	UNDP									XXX	XXX
4	UNHCR	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		
5	UNICEF					xx	xx	xx	xx		
6	UNIDO		XXX		XXX						
7	UNOCHA	xxx						xx	xx		xx
8	UNOPS	XX	XX	XXX	XX						
9	WFP			xxx							
10	WHO					xxx					
	NGOs										
11	ACBAR									xxx	
12	DACCAR					XXX		XX	XX		
13	HAFO		XXX								
14	MCI	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX			XX	XX		
15	SWABAC						XXX	XX	XX		
16	VARA	XXX	XXX								
	Other										
17	ADA						XXX				
18	ADB									xx	
19	ANCB										
20	CDAP							xx	xx		
21	ILO										
22	IOM	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	xxx	
23	ProMIS					xx	xx				
24	UNCHS							xx	xx		
25	UNESCO					xxx					
26	UNFPA									xx	
27	World Bnk										

Key: XXX = possible major role; xx = lesser or specialist role

Some brief explanatory notes as to the potential roles for HPG members and observers follow.

HPG Members

FAO

Food Security: activities in QDS and fertiliser programme (possibly with WFP), development and technical support of extension programmes in IPP, horticulture and livestock productivity improvement. Training in irrigation water management and land leveling programmes. Provision of veterinary services. **Agricultural infrastructure:** technical assistance for irrigation rehabilitation activities. **Agricultural Marketing:** technical assistance in the design and implementation of market improvement activities. Development of women's programmes in milk production and sale, home gardens and quasi-commercial food preservation activities.

UNDCP

Transpose current experience in the implementation of community-based programmes from Qandahar to Helmand in a range of areas, particularly

agriculture, credit and marketing, also **community awareness and leadership**. Activities could include support role for QDCCP.

UNDP — **Programme leadership**, **supervision** of core staff, **liaison** with regional authorities.

UNHCR — Emphasis on **support to refugee return** which will involve activities across a number of areas, either on a stand-alone basis or in cooperation with other UN agencies and/or NGOs.

UNICEF — **Health:** Vaccination and Mother and Child health, either as stand-alone or collaborative programmes.

UNIDO — **Agricultural markets and infrastructure:** Feasibility studies for the development of markets and processing facilities, facilitation of co-financing of infrastructure development in flour milling, cotton, edible oil processing and fruit processing and marketing.

UNOCHA — **Mine Clearance:** Assistance to food security and community awareness and leadership activities. **Government liaison:** Lead role in facilitating linkages between the programme and regional authorities.

UNOPS — **Credit development:** Major input to the implementation and management of credit programmes. **Community leadership:** Implementation and training support to community *shuras*. Development of women's programmes.

WFP — Cross-cutting role in support to programmes in **food security, refugee return** and **community development**.

WHO — **Health:** Establishment of village clinics, either as stand-alone activity or in conjunction with other agencies/NGOs.

ACBAR — Support role to core programme, particularly in field surveys for **monitoring and evaluation**.

DACCAR — **Health:** Ongoing work in areas of clean water, sanitation and household health. **Community leadership:** Working with communities to identify and prioritise health and sanitation issues.

HAFO — **Agricultural infrastructure:** Implementation of rehabilitation works for existing major irrigation structures and local civil works.

MCI — Implementation of own programme and Implementing Partner (IP) role in **food security** and **agricultural infrastructure** activities; potentially significant role in the implementation of **credit development** and **agricultural markets**. Role in **community awareness and leadership**.

SWABAC — **Education:** through teacher training and the development of curriculum materials, possible administration of schools. Support to core team in field survey work.

VARA — **Food security:** seed production and veterinary services and **agricultural infrastructure:** in irrigation rehabilitation and development.

Observer Members/Other Organisations

ADA	**Education:** administration and operation of schools, development of training and curriculum materials, IP role in **agricultural marketing** and **extension**.
ADB	Longer-term role in funding.
ANCB	**Agricultural infrastructure:** Particularly construction and engineering activities.
CDAP	**Community support:** Support to community programmes through assistance to disabled household members through physiotherapy and physical training and provision of artificial limbs.
ILO	**Employment development:** Support to the development of employment development programmes, especially in conjunction with infrastructure and market development.
IOM	Support to refugee return programmes.
ProMIS	Technical support role to the Strategy planning staff.
UNCHS	**Community development:** Support to community development, particularly through experience in urban-based community activities.
UNESCO	Support to the development of **education** programmes.
UNFPA	**Health:** a structured programme to address the issue of overpopulation, particularly in the northern areas.
World Bank	Longer-term role in funding, together with ongoing background research as a source of information for the Strategy planning staff.

7.1.3 Actions

Table 19 sets out the proposed initial strategic interventions by programme and sub-programme. The presentation is divided into four periods of six months, commencing in September 2000. Detailed proposals are provided for the first two periods. Detailed ongoing plans for the second year and beyond will be the responsibility of the core planning team.

There will be two concurrent streams of action. One is to address the need for on-ground community contact, investigations, surveys and feasibility studies to ensure that forward planning is soundly based. The other is to meet the need for well targeted and observable actions that communities can see and experience. Recommended actions include rebuilding the collapsed footbridge crossing the floodway at the market adjacent to the former HVA equipment depot. While this would not directly affect food production, it is a highly public location and would serve to alert many community members to the existence of the Strategy. The rebuilding of the footway could be combined with an awareness campaign through local mosques in Nad-e-Ali, Marja and Nahr-e-Saraj to send a message that actions were underway to improve food security agricultural markets and community welfare in conjunction with poppy reduction.

Rehabilitation of canals and drains in the main irrigation scheme are another activity which would have a high public profile. The work carried out on the Boghra canal in 1998-99 employed large numbers of local men and made a significant direct cash injection into the local economy.

Table 19 Helmand Initiative initial strategic interventions

Programme 1. Food Security		Programme 2. Economic Independence		Programme 3. Social Independence		Programme 4. Good Governance		Programme 5. Core Activities	
Food Security	Agricultural Infrastructure	Credit Development	Agricultural Markets	Health and sanitation	Education	Community awareness	Community leadership	Core Activities	Government liaison
PERIOD 1 Ensure adequate QDS and fertiliser available Nov '00 Initiate preparation of water-use efficiency training programme Plan micro area land-leveling programme Implement crop and horticulture extension programme Implement livestock productivity extension programme	**Months 1-6** Plan and implement short-term public works programme Undertake survey of kareze areas to identify needs and available resources Prepare plan for rehabilitation of the Boghra drainage system Implement drainage rehabilitation in winter 2000-01	Undertake credit needs planning survey Initiate preparation of village-level credit schemes	Initiate project for three year market development activities	Coordinate existing health and sanitation programmes in Helmand to identify gaps and priorities Implement ongoing health and sanitation programmes Undertake needs survey to identify priorities for future actions	Clarify status of primary schooling with authorities Identify education delivery capacity through NGO/IPs Establish school/poppy tradeoff framework with Ips	Identify pilot communities for collaboration with the Strategy Make contact with male and female leaders Initiate development of in-village poppy awareness training Identify common-interest groups for further links	Identify pilot communities Make contact with male and female leaders	Establish Helmand Strategy Agreement with members of the HPG Recruit core staff and acquire vehicles, equipment and offices. Consult with HPG members on current actions and strategic priorities Conduct needs survey to identify villages Prepare outline of draft first year plan and submit to HPG	Negotiate Helmand Strategy framework agreement with authorities Implement poppy enforcement training program for authorities Consult local authorities on details of draft plan
PERIOD 2 Implement water-use efficiency management training Implement micro-area land-levelling programme Continue extension schemes	**Months 7-12** Implement drainage rehabilitation	Implement training for village-level credit schemes Implement village-level credit schemes	Implement market development activities	Implement ongoing village by village health and sanitation programmes Implement household health and dietary training programmes	Implement teacher training Develop and produce teaching materials Start schools in selected areas	Conduct in-village poppy awareness training	Initiate leadership training programmes for community leaders	Conduct baseline survey in action areas Complete first year plan in consultation with HPG	

Table 19 Helmand Initiative initial strategic interventions (continued)

Programme 1. Food Security		Programme 2. Economic Independence		Programme 3. Social Independence		Programme 4. Good Governance		Programme 5. Core Activities	
Food Security	Agricultural Infrastructure	Credit Development	Agricultural Markets	Health and sanitation	Education	Community awareness	Community leadership	Core Activities	Government liaison
PERIOD 3	**Months 13-18**								
Ensure adequate QDS and fertiliser available Nov '01 Implement crop and horticulture extension programme Implement livestock productivity extension programme Implement water-use efficiency management training Implement micro-area land-levelling programme	Implement canal and drainage rehabilitation winter 2000-01		Continue market development programme	Implement ongoing village by village health and sanitation programmes Implement household health and dietary training programmes	Implement teacher training Operate schools in selected areas	Conduct in-village poppy awareness training	Continue community consultation	Prepare draft of three year rolling programme in consultation with HPG members Submit draft of three year rolling programme to HPG	Implement second poppy enforcement training program for authorities
PERIOD 4	**Months 19-24**								
Implement crop and horticulture extension programme Implement livestock productivity extension programme Implement water-use efficiency management training Implement micro-area land-levelling programme	Continue canal and drainage rehabilitation		Continue market development programme	Implement ongoing village by village health and sanitation programmes Implement household health and dietary training programmes	Implement teacher training Operate schools in selected areas		Continue community consultation	Prepare outline of draft second year plan and submit to HPG Prepare draft of second three year rolling programme in consultation with HPG members	Consult authorities on details of draft plan Consult authorities on details of draft three year plan

8 STRATEGY BUDGET

8.1 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The Strategy sets out an operational framework within which the various agencies, NGOs and donors can work together to meet common goals. It identifies the issues which must be addressed to tackle the problem of opium production and sets out how this can be done. However, at this stage of the Strategy development, budgeting is an open-ended process.

A suitable structure of the core programme to provide the planning, management, evaluation and monitoring capacity can be planned with some accuracy. Budgeting for this is relatively straightforward. However, budgeting for the four development programmes is a more indeterminate matter. Fundamental to the strategic approach, is allowing flexibility between the various programmes, or parts thereof. Donors have differing priorities which may lead to some programme elements attracting more funding than others. Some elements already exist and some may eventually operate at different levels to others depending on available technical resources and funding.

Indicative budgets for the first two years of the four development programmes are set out below. There is room for some flexibility between donors and agencies, particularly in establishing the level at which the programmes will operate and the extent to which they will be either pilot or fully implemented activities. In addition, the budgets as presented, make some relatively optimistic assumptions as to the speed with which interventions can be implemented. They also include capital works where external circumstances may delay implementation, thus changing the funding requirements.

Given the relatively short planning horizon to the intended start date, a significant proportion of the initial funding is directed at food security-related activities. These are relatively well understood in the Afghan context and if necessary, can be transposed from similar activities elsewhere. The successful planning and implementation of the economic and social independence and governance elements of the program will be more dependent on social surveys and the community consultation process proposed for the early stages of the Strategy. There is an implicit assumption that over time, the proportion of funds for food security activities would reduce in favour of increased emphasis on the social and community-oriented elements of the programme.

8.2 DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The overall indicative budget is put at $8.9 million over the first two years and is summarised in Table 20. The budgets for the individual programmes follow in Tables 21 to 26.

Table 20 Helmand Strategy Summary Budget for first two years ($'000)

Programme	Period (months)				2 year
	1. (1-6)	2. (7-12)	3. (13-18)	4. (19-24)	Total
1. Food Security (Table 21)	940	1035	1350	975	4300
2. Economic Independence (Table 22)	20	140	390	450	1000
3. Social Independence (Table 23)	30	375	515	480	1400
4. Governance (Table 24)	25	45	55	55	180
5. Core Activities (Tables 25 and 26)	629	566	475	394	2064
Strategy Total	1644	2161	2785	2354	8944

Source: Consultant's estimates.

The budget assumes that planned programmes will come into action on time, which may not be the case in practice. The core programme budget assumes all staff are in place by September 2000, which is ambitious. There are a variety of capital works and rolling credit funds across all programmes, the outlays for which may spread over a longer period.

IMPLEMENTATION

.26 The goal of the strategy is to assist Afghans, particularly the people of Helmand, to build a sustainable future, create economic and social independence, and to govern themselves in peace.

.27 The Strategy is divided into five programmes. Four are semi-independent, but interlinked development programmes covering key interventions, viz: (i) Food security; (ii) Economic independence; (iii) Social independence; and (iv) Governance. The fifth, programme will facilitate Strategy planning and management.

.28 Immediate objectives and interventions or activities are proposed for each programme, based on the strategic issues identified in Section 4 of this document. These include: increased food security through more effective use of resources; refurbishment of irrigation schemes; provision of non opium-linked credit; development of functional markets for agricultural outputs; improved community health and education; and the development of governance through community awareness and leadership.

.29 Core activities of the Strategy will be built around the preparation and implementation of a one-year detailed programme and a rolling three-year forward programme. These will be prepared by the Programme Manager in consultation with HPG members and submitted to the HPG for approval. A significant component will be ongoing field surveys to ensure a sound understanding of community aspirations and to provide a regular feedback on programme performance.

.30 Two concurrent action streams are proposed for the first two years of the Strategy. One will address the need for on-ground community contact, investigations and surveys to ensure that forward planning is soundly based. The other will be to implement selected, well targeted and observable interventions, so that communities can see that something worthwhile is happening. These latter interventions will include canal and drainage rehabilitation and some smaller-scale civil works which will impact on communities as a whole, rather than just farmers. Ongoing plans for the second year and beyond will be undertaken by the core planning team.

.31 The Strategy sets out an operational framework within which the various agencies, NGOs and donors can work together to meet common goals. It identifies the issues which must be addressed to tackle the problem of opium production and sets out how this can be done. The indicative Strategy budget for the first two years is $ 8.9 million. Of this, the detailed budget for the core resources required to conduct the overall strategic approach is $2.1 million.

.32 Budgeting for the four development programmes is a more open-ended matter. It is important to allow flexibility between the various programmes, or their component parts. Donors have differing priorities. Some elements already exist, others may eventually operate at different levels depending on funding and available resources. The indicative budgets for the first two years total $6.8 million, being: (i) Food Security $4.3 million; (ii) Economic Independence $1.0 million, (iii) Social Independence $1.4 million and (iv) Governance, $0.2 million. The budgets make some relatively optimistic assumptions as to the speed with which initiatives can be implemented and include capital works where funding needs may stretch out over longer periods.

.33 It is recommended that the draft Strategy be circulated. The next step must be the acceptance by the HPG of the proposed programme and structure. Following this, more work must be done on the scale and scope of the four development programmes and the preparation of an ongoing implementation programme and detailed budgets.

Comments on each of the individual programme budgets are made below.

8.2.1 Programme 1. Food Security

Total budget amount is $ 4.3 million. The programme has two parts, food security ($ 1.8 million) and agricultural infrastructure ($ 2.5 million). For food security, three main areas of action are proposed: (i) providing adequate supplies of good quality seed and fertiliser; (ii) improving the efficiency of water use through improved in-field leveling and the training of *mirabs* and farmers; and (iii) raising output by use of better technology through extension services in agriculture, horticulture and livestock. Improved access to seed and fertiliser has direct links to the credit programme proposed in Programme 2.1. Details are in Table 21.

Table 21 Strategy Programme 1. Food Security - Budget for first two years ($'000)

Subprogramme	Activity	Period – Months				2 year
		1 (1-6)	2 (7-12)	3 (13-18)	4 (19-24)	Total
1.1 Food Security	Adequate seed and fertiliser supplies	300		300		600
	Prepare water use training	20	60			80
	Implement water efficiency training		75		75	150
	Implement in-field levelling programme			300	150	450
	Develop ag & hort extension programme		50			50
	Implement ag & hort extension programme			150	150	300
	Implement livestock productivity ext programme			100	100	200
	Total Subprogramme 1.1	320	185	850	475	1830
1.2 Agricultural Infrastructure	Needs and resources survey of kareze areas	20	50			70
	Prepare overall Boghra rehabilitation programme		100			100
	Local short-term public works programme	300				300
	Implement main irrigation scheme drainage/canal rehabilitation	300	700	500	500	2000
	Total Subprogramme 1.2	620	850	500	500	2470
	Total Programme 1.	940	1035	1350	975	4300

Source: Consultant's estimates.

Interventions on agricultural infrastructure in the first two years are largely directed at rehabilitation of the main irrigation scheme. Drainage of the Boghra canal command area is seen as the initial priority, to make better use of the benefits gained from the 1998-99 work on the canal. Seasonal timing is important, with canal works largely being confined to the winter period. An allowance is made for preparation of an overall plan for ongoing rehabilitation works. An important part of the rehabilitation work must be a parallel program to build up the capacity of HAVA to enable it to carry out continuing maintenance work on the rehabilitated canals and drains.

8.2.2 Programme 2. Economic Independence

The key activities for Programme 2 are instituting a non opium-linked credit programme and improving the functioning of agricultural markets. The indicative budget is given in Table 22.

Table 22 Strategy Programme 2. Economic Independence - Budget for first two years ($'000)

Sub programme	Activity	Period – Months				2 year
		1 (1-6)	2 (7-12)	3 (13-18)	4 (19-24)	Total
2.1 Credit Development	Undertake credit needs survey	20	50			70
	Prepare village-level credit schemes		50			50
	Implement village-level credit training			250	250	500
	Total Subprogramme 2.1	20	100	250	250	620
2.2 Agricultural Markets	Prepare 3 year marketing project		40	40		80
	Implement market development programme			100	200	300
	Total Subprogramme 2.2	0	40	140	200	380
	Total Programme 2.	20	140	390	450	1000

Source: Consultant's estimates.

The credit programme is needed to enable farmers to purchase agricultural inputs at sensible prices and without the need to grow opium to repay the loan. An initial sum of $500,000 is budgeted for a rolling credit fund including its management costs. Improved agricultural markets are an essential corollary to the provision of credit, as farmers must be able to sell non-opium products in order to repay the loans. The market development programme will necessarily have a relatively long time horizon to reach a sustainable level.

8.2.3 Programme 3. Social Independence

Programme 3 has an initial two-year budget of $1.4 million. The Programme addresses the social development objective for international development assistance in Afghanistan, with emphasis on the rights of women and children, for families to be socially and economically independent and the provision of general health care and education. There are existing health and sanitation programmes in Helmand, notably implemented by DACCAR. These programmes would continue within the framework of the Strategy and be augmented by other inputs, particularly village-level health programmes.

Education is a prime issue with many community leaders. The budget includes funding for teacher training and the development of teaching materials in the initial stages, following on to the operation of local schools. Details are given in Table 23.

Table 23 Strategy Programme 3. Social Independence - Budget for first two years ($'000)

Sub programme	Activity	Period – Months				2 year
		1 (1-6)	2 (7-12)	3 (13-18)	4 (19-24)	Total
3.1 Health and Sanitation	Coordinate existing programme to identify gaps and priorities	25				25
	Implement ongoing health and sanitation programmes		150	150	150	450
	Undertake needs survey to identify priorities for future actions		50			50
	Implement village-level health and sanitation programmes		20	85	100	205
	Implement household health and dietary programmes		10	30	30	70
	Total Subprogramme 3.1	25	230	265	280	800
3.2 Education	Clarify status of primary schooling with authorities	5				5
	Identify education delivery capacity through NGO/IP		25			25
	Establish school/poppy tradeoff framework with NGO/IPS		15			15
	Implement teacher training		40	100	100	240
	Develop and produce primary teaching materials		25	50		75
	Start schools in selected areas		40	100	100	240
	Total Subprogramme 3.2	5	145	250	200	600
	Total Programme 3.	30	375	515	480	1400

Source: Consultant's estimates.

8.2.4 Programme 4. Governance

The initial sum provided for the governance programme is $ 0.18 million. Details are given in Table 24.

Table 24 Strategy Programme 4. Governance - Budget for first two years ($'000)

Sub programme	Activity	Period – Months				2 year
		1 (1-6)	2 (7-12)	3 (13-18)	4 (19-24)	Total
4.1 Community awareness	Identify pilot communities for collaboration with Strategy	5				5
	Make contact with male and female leaders	5				5
	Initiate development of in-village poppy awareness training		20	30	30	80
	Identify common interest groups for further links	5	5			10
	Total Subprogramme 4.1	15	25	30	30	100
4.2 Community leadership	Identify pilot communities	5				5
	Make contact with male and female leaders	5		5		10
	Implement training for male and female leaders		20	20	25	65
	Total Subprogramme 4.2	10	20	25	25	80
	Total Programme 4.	25	45	55	55	180

Source: Consultant's estimates.

Governance is a vital issue in the Strategy. In part, the civil war has been an unresolved struggle between central and local authority over governance in the countryside. This position has been recognised in various elements of international assistance to Afghanistan, which for some years have been working to support local governance. If the people of Helmand are to resolve individually and collectively to reduce opium production, they will need appropriate structures to arrive at and enforce, such decisions. It will be a slow process and the amounts budgeted are seen as the only the first steps. Some work is already underway in this area by UNOPS. In the first instance, much of the approach to governance issues will be through other programmes.

8.3 CORE PROGRAMME

The responsibilities of the core programme are planning, supervision, monitoring and evaluation. The manager of the core programme will be a qualified planner and experienced project manager who will coordinate between the participating HPG members and lead the planning process. The second member of the professional team will be an experienced monitoring and evaluation specialist who will manage the ongoing survey programme and evaluate the survey and programme outputs. Given the considerable survey activity of the initial two years, a programme assistant is included to support the field work component. The indicative budget of $1.8 million for the operational programme, including $1.2 million staff costs and $0.6 million equipment and operating costs is given in Table 25.

Table 25 Strategy Programme 5 – Staffing and Operational Budget for first two years ($'000)

Category	Item	Rate	Months	Year 1	Months	Year 2	Total
Staff	Programme Manager	14	12	168	12	168	336
Professional	Survey/Evaluation and Monitoring Specialist	12.5	12	150	12	150	300
	Programme Assistant – Surveys	7	12	84	12	84	168
	National Professional - Planning x 2	1.5	24	36	24	36	72
	National Professional - Surveys x 2	1.5	24	36	24	36	72
	Consultants	13	6	78	6	78	156
	Subtotal Professional staff			552		552	1104
Support	Drivers x 5	0.4	60	24.0	60	24	48
	Office x 3	0.65	36	23.4	36	23.4	46.8
	Subtotal Support staff			47.4		47.4	94.8
	Total staff			599.4		599.4	1198.8
Travel	International			50		50	100
	Local			30		30	60
	Subtotal Travel			80		80	160
Vehicles	Landcruiser x 4	40000		160			160
Equipment	Office equipment, computers etc			60		20	80
	Radios and communications			25			25
	Subtotal Vehicles and Equipment			245		20	265
Training	Training programmes			15		15	30
Operating	Local procurement			75		75	150
	Subtotal Training and Operating			90		90	180
	Budget Total			1014.4		789.4	1803.8

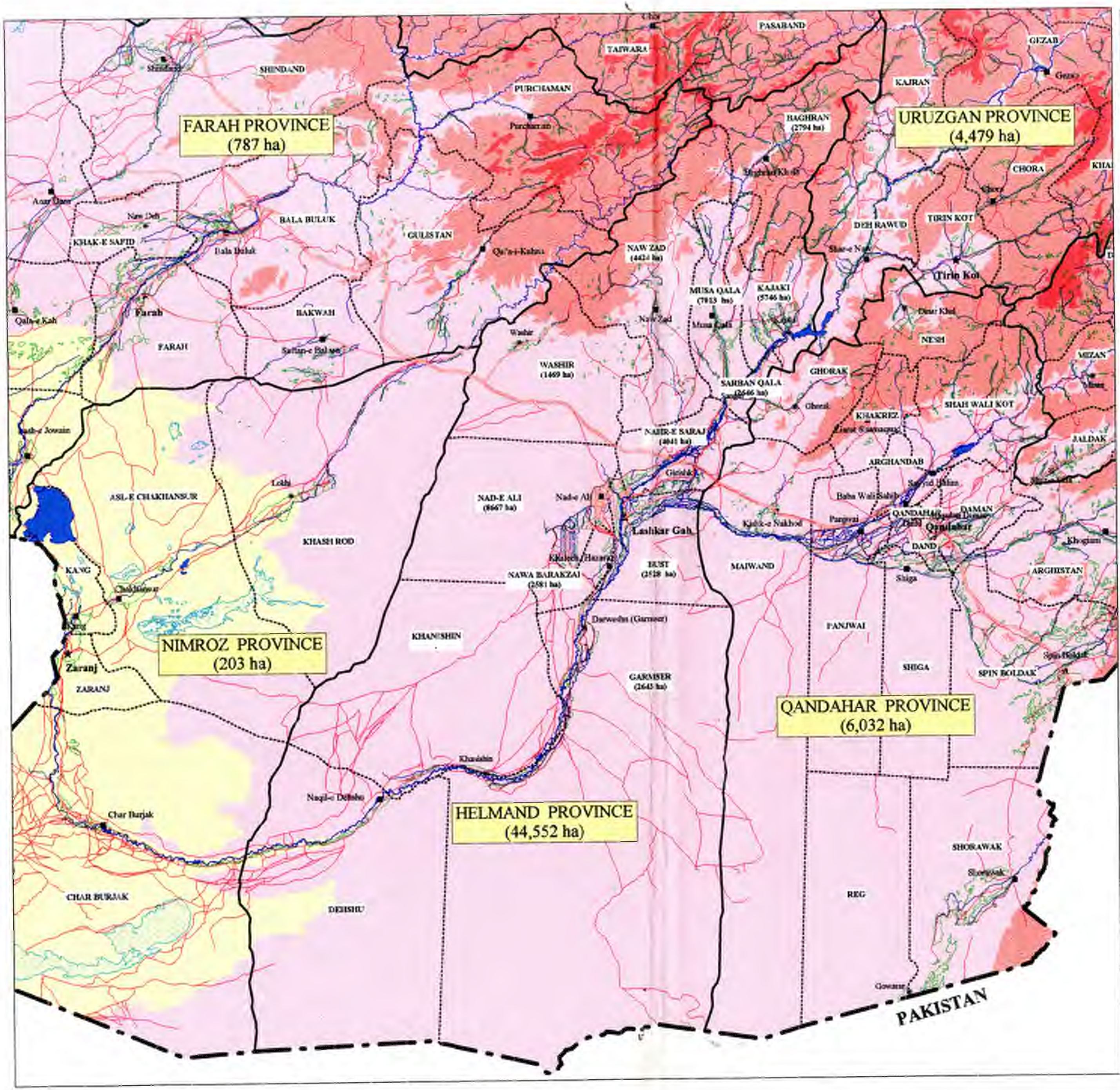
Source: Consultant's estimates.

Four national professional staff are planned to ensure that the workload can be handled in the early phases and so that they can be trained for future programme leadership roles. Provision is made for consultants to work on the preparation and delivery of the various training programmes and international travel is provided to support this. The duty station for the core programme will be Lashkar Gah and there is expected to be a significant amount of local travel between Helmand, Qandahar and Islamabad in the early planning phases. Four vehicles are provided to ensure adequate resources for field work and for the inevitable travel between Lashkar Gah and Qandahar. The project will need an adequate complement of computer and office resources to support the survey and monitoring work.

HELMAND PROVINCE (MAP-1)

OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION 1999

(HECTARES)



KM.

0 20 40

ProMIS

UNDP/FAO

LEGEND

- Elevation 0 - 600 Meters
- Elevation 600 - 1500 Meters
- Elevation 1500 - 2800 Meters
- Elevation 2800 - 6500 Meters
- International Boundary
- Province Boundary
- District (MCD) Boundary
- Province Centre
- District Centre
- Sub-District Centre
- Cultivated Area
- Lake
- Dry Lake
- River / Canals
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Tertiary Road

POPPY HECTARES 1999

District -> BUST (2,528 ha)

Province -> Helmand (44,552 ha)



SOURCES:

Opium Poppy Cultivation in Hectares, 1999:

Data from UNDCP Afghanistan Programme, Annual Opium Poppy Survey 1999.

ROAD, RIVER, & CULTIVATED AREA:

Digitized from Afghanistan Map 1:100,000 series (USDMA) (Washington 1968 - 1985). These represent, with a few exceptions, pre-war information.

PROVINCE BORDERS & DISTRICT (MCD) BORDERS & CODES:

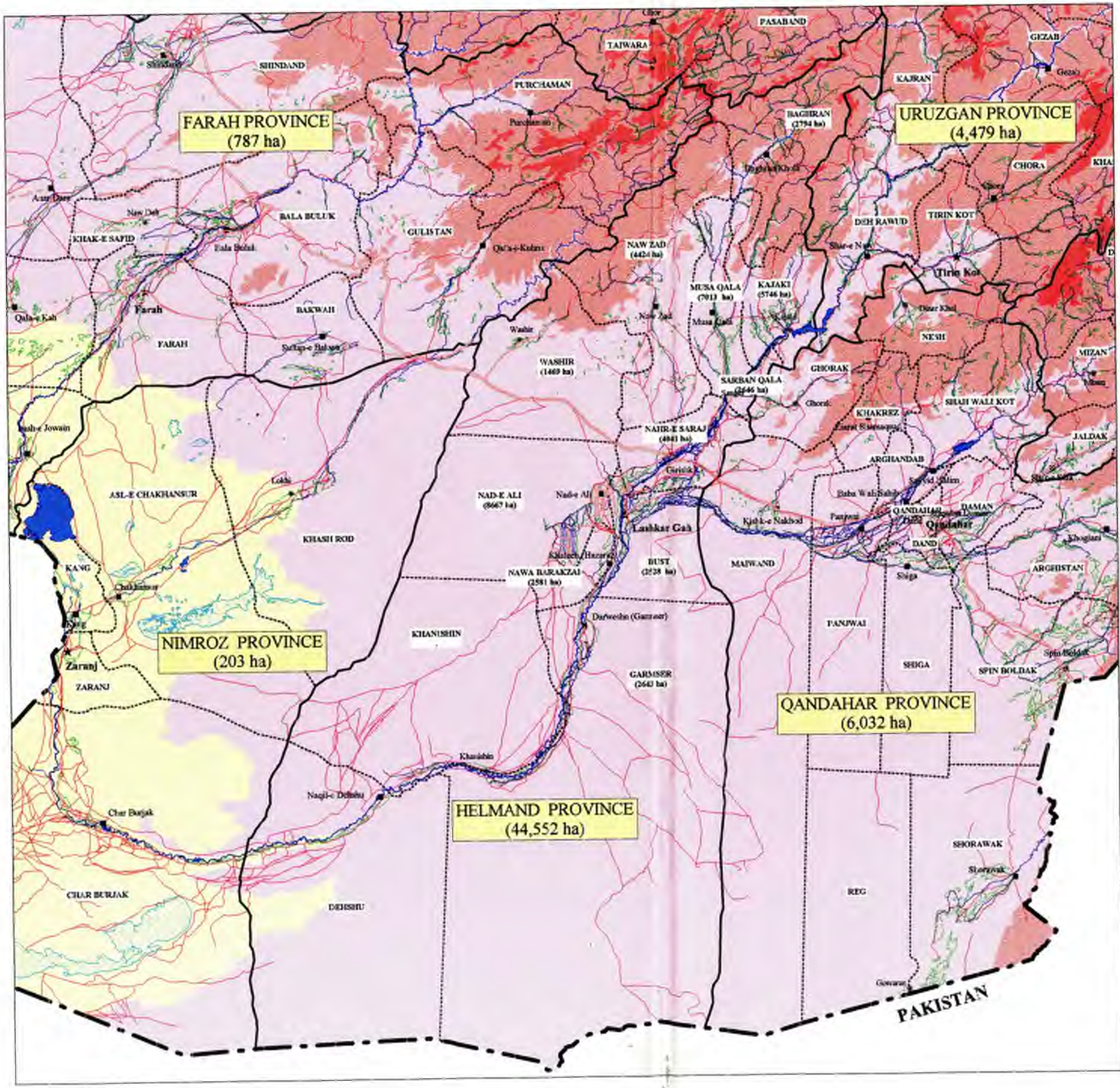
Minor Civil Divisions Map A. Ashraf et al. for the ADB & the Ministry of Planning (Kabul, 1973). Province borders follows old community reporting standards and do not reflect recent changes. MCD boundaries are accurate to within 10 km.

DESIGNATIONS & BOUNDARIES:

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontier or boundaries.

Map by: UNDP/ProMIS, (11/99).

Prj.: AFG/97/001/A/08/12.



HELMAND PROVINCE (MAP-1)

OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION 1999

(HECTARES)

KM.

0 20 40

ProMIS

UNDP/FAO

LEGEND

- Elevation 0 - 600 Meters
- Elevation 600 - 1500 Meters
- Elevation 1500 - 2800 Meters
- Elevation 2800 - 6500 Meters
- International Boundary
- Province Boundary
- District (MCD) Boundary
- ★ Province Centre
- ■ District Centre
- Sub-District Centre
- Cultivated Area
- Lake
- Dry Lake
- River / Canals
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Tertiary Road

POPPY HECTARES 1999

District -> BUST (2,528 ha)

Province -> Helmand (44,552 ha)



SOURCES:

Opium Poppy Cultivation in Hectares, 1999:

Data from UNDCP Afghanistan Programme, Annual Opium Poppy Survey 1999.

ROAD, RIVER, & CULTIVATED AREA:

Digitised from Afghanistan Map 1:100,000 series (USDMA) (Washington 1966 - 1985). These represent, with a few exceptions, present information.

PROVINCE BORDERS & DISTRICT (MCD) BORDERS & CODES:

Minor Civil Divisions Map A. Ashraf et al. for the ADF & the Ministry of Planning (Kabul, 1973). Province borders follows old community reporting standards and do not reflect recent changes. MCD boundaries are accurate to within 20 km.

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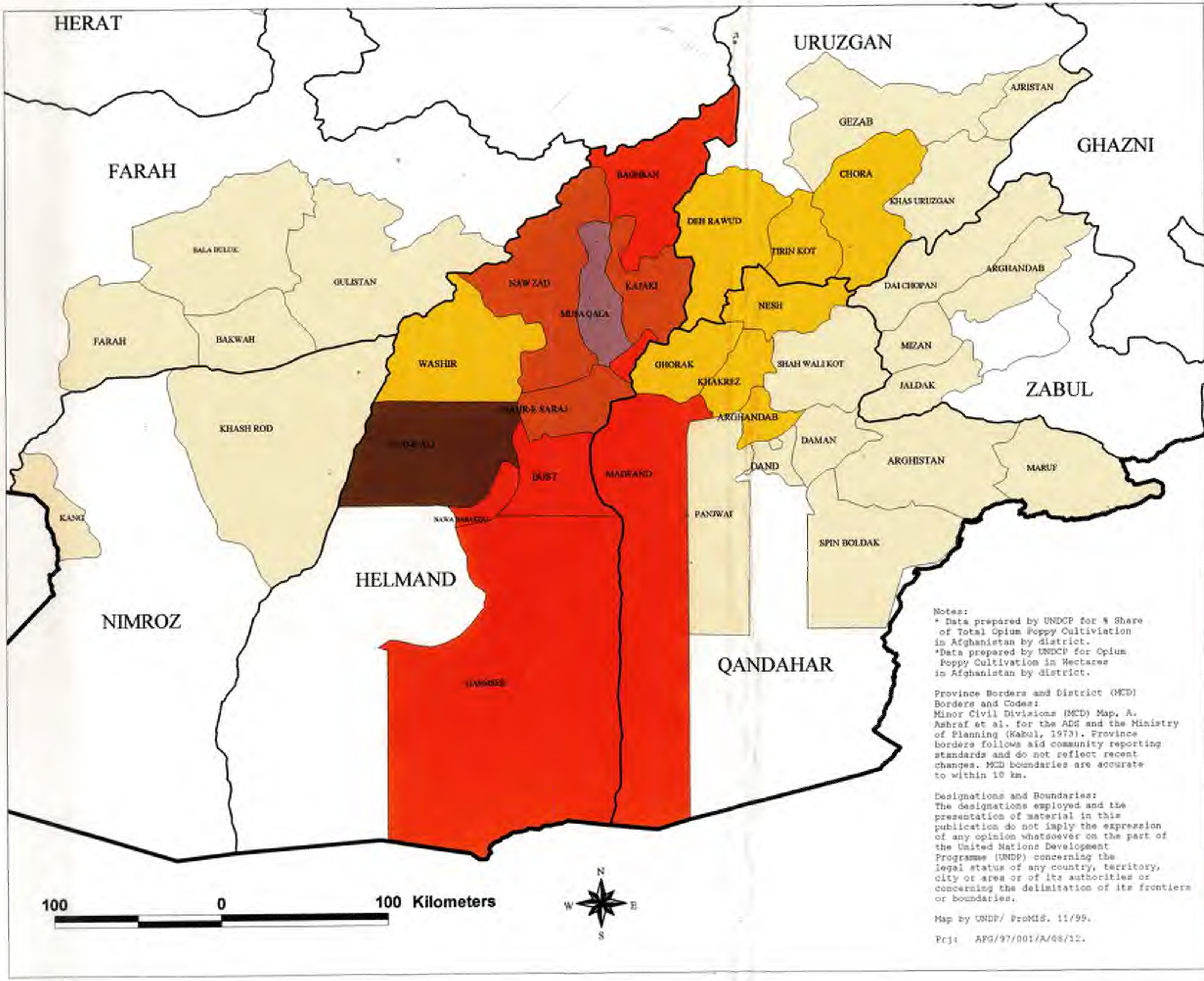
Map by: UNDP/ProMIS, (11/99).

Prj.: AFG/97/001/A/08/12.

ProMIS

UNDP/FAO

HELMAND PROVINCE (MAP-2)
OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION AREA
BY DISTRICT 1999.





LEGEND:
International Boundaries
Province Boundaries

Opium Poppy Cultivation in Hectares.
- No Data
- 0 - 500
- 501 - 2000
- 2001 - 4000
- 4001 - 6000
- 6001 - 800
- > 8001

The core programme will provide the professional capacity to implement the Strategy. It will be responsible for the coordination between the existing and proposed activities of the various HPG members and planning further interventions. This will be implemented through an ongoing process with a firm current one-year plan and a rolling three-year plan. The planning process will be strengthened by a regular programme of monitoring and evaluation. The overall budget for Programme 5 is given in Table 26.

Table 26 Strategy Programme 5. Core Activities - Budget for first two years ($'000)

Sub programme	Activity	Period – Months				2 year Total
		1 (1-6)	2 (7-12)	3 (13-18)	4 (19-24)	
5.1 Core activities	Establish Helmand Strategy Agreement					0
	Recruit core staff, vehicles, offices etc (Table 25)	609	406	395	394	1804
	Conduct needs survey to identify villages	20	40			60
	Prepare draft First Year plan		40			40
	Conduct baseline surveys in action areas		30	30		60
	Total Subprogramme 5.1	629	516	425	394	1964
5.2 Government liaison	Negotiate Helmand Strategy Agreement with authorities					0
	Implement poppy enforcement training for authorities		50	50		100
	Total Subprogramme 5.2	0	50	50	0	100
	Total Programme 5.	629	566	475	394	2064

Source: Consultant's estimates.

It is recommended that the draft Strategy be circulated to the members of the HPG. The next step must be the acceptance by the HPG of the proposed programme and operating structure. Following this, more work must be done on the scale and scope of the four development programmes and the preparation of an ongoing implementation programme and detailed budgets.

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2 THE STRATEGIC SETTING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The preparation of the Helmand Strategy is a major step in implementing the groundbreaking initiative for inter-agency cooperation in Afghanistan commenced at the Ashgebad Forum in January 1997. The common programming process developed by the Forum is an attempt to improve the coherence and effectiveness of the response by the aid community to the ongoing crisis situation in Afghanistan. At the same time, a parallel process led by the UN Inter-Agency Mission to Afghanistan has sought to develop a Strategic Framework to enhance the synergy between the UN political strategy in Afghanistan and the international assistance activities.[1] The first formal steps were taken in April 1997, when the Administrative Coordination Committee of the UN selected Afghanistan for the development of a Strategic Framework and Principled Common Programme (PCP).[2]

Common programming is a mechanism for establishing the assistance community's priorities, programmes and projects. These are based on agreed goals, principles and the expressed needs of Afghans. The purpose is to ensure that needs identified in close consultation with Afghan constituencies are translated into coherent, principled and cost-effective programmes and to ensure that these are based upon agreed goals and principles and implemented in accordance with the capacities of the international assistance community. The overall goals and principles are set by the Strategic Framework process. The goal of international assistance is to empower Afghans to build sustainable livelihoods; including emergency assistance to vulnerable populations, reintegration assistance to returnees and appropriate assistance to achieve social and economic recovery, thereby contributing to the sustainability of peace.[3]

The common programming mechanism aims to ensure that: [4]

- (a) all assistance activities and projects are clearly attached/related to specific programmes;
- (b) prioritisation of programmes is informed by research and analysis of the current situation and of the expressed needs of beneficiaries, female and male;
- (c) programmes demonstrate that they embody agreed principles and operational norms; and
- (d) priorities are determined at the regional and national levels on the basis of: (i) understanding and analysis of the political, economic, social and humanitarian situation, including the condition of women and children; (ii) clarity about Afghan and external actors' implementation capacities; (iii) clarity about mandates; (iv) common policies; and (v) impact assessment.

The benefits to be gained from common programming are seen to be: (i) policy clarity; (ii) greater programming efficiency; (iii) stronger coordination; (iv) clarity about impact; (v) transparency; (vi) lessons learned; and (vii) peace building potential.[5]

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1 UNOCHA. 1998. *Strategic Framework for Afghanistan: Towards a Principled Approach to Peace and Reconstruction*. Islamabad, September 1998. p.1.

2 UNOCHA. 1999. *Strategic Framework for Afghanistan and Principled Common Programme, Chronology of Events*. Islamabad, 1999.

3 UNOCHA, 1998. *Making a Reality of Principled Common Programming.* Islamabad, April 1998.

4 UNOCHA, 1998. op. cit. pp.2-3.

5 UNOCHA, 1998. op. cit. p.3.

A unified structure has been implemented to assist the functioning of common programming, comprising Regional Coordinating Bodies (RCBs) at the field level and an Afghan Programming Board (APB) at the national level.

The APB provides coordination in the common programming process on a national level and on a system-wide basis. The APB is made up of senior representatives of all UN agencies and programmes, together with the NGO and donor communities. It supports programme formulation, coordination and consolidation at both the regional and national level. The core functions cover eight distinct, but mutually reinforcing categories: (i) policy setting and clarification; (ii) programme review and prioritisation; (iii) information management; (iv) monitoring and evaluation; (v) capacity assessment; (vi) the Consolidated Appeal; (vii) provision of training opportunities; and (viii) administration and logistics.[6] In fulfilling its functions, the APB has appointed five thematic groups, with the Sustainable Livelihoods as the key group for the Helmand Strategy.

The RCBs operate at the field level where their general task is to instigate the formulation of programme proposals and review these for inclusion in the Consolidated Appeal. They support a number of common programming services including communication and security, information services and shared use of resources.[7] There are five RCBs, East, South, West, North and Central, with the North and Central bodies having sub-offices covering the high mountain hardship areas. RCB South covers Qandahar, Zabul, Helmand, Nimroz, Oruzgan and Ghazni. It is the appropriate RCB to link with the Helmand Strategy as the poppy problem flows over the provincial borders into all the neighbouring provinces.

The official paper on the PCP process comments that 'realism is required as to what can be achieved in the near future and how the common programming process might contribute to the broader goal of achieving peace in Afghanistan. Overall success depends on stakeholder commitment and upon mutual goodwill in working towards a new way of doing business. Without these it cannot work.'[8]

A broad group of stakeholders are involved in the PCP process. These include : (i) Afghans, (ii) UN members states, including refugee host countries, other neighbouring countries and donor governments; (iii) the UN family including international financial institutions; (iv) the NGO community, the ICRC and the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; and (v) the private sector, both international, regional and local. [9]

Underlying the common programming approach is the concept that assistance activities will be driven by needs identified in close collaboration with Afghan communities and beneficiaries. The constituencies which can be engaged in this process include the remaining, though small, number of Afghan technocrats, rural communities, including nomadic groups, urban communities, refugees, Afghans settled abroad and the authorities. There are two relevant issues in engaging constituencies for the Helmand Strategy. These are the need for participatory techniques in assessing community needs and resources, and the need to actively engage the local authorities in the development and implementation of the Strategy. The development of a civil society will be a key issue in attempts to reduce the production of opium poppy in Helmand and the involvement of the regional administration will be an important element in this process.

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6 UNOCHA, 1998. op. cit. pp.8-11.

7 UNOCHA, 1998. op. cit. pp.5-8.

8 UNOCHA, 1998. op. cit. p.11.

9 UNOCHA, 1998. op. cit. pp.11-13.

2.2 THE HELMAND PLANNING GROUP

The Helmand Planning Group (HPG) was formed in April 1999 to develop an Inter-agency Integrated Development Programme for Helmand Province. Under the concept of principled common programming its aim is to coordinate the development assistance activities of the many agencies and NGOs operating in the Helmand Valley. A particular emphasis of the HPG is to develop coordinated approaches to the burgeoning problem of opium poppy in Afghanistan, with Helmand as the largest producing province.

The HPG has sixteen directly involved members and eleven other agencies or NGOs who keep a watching brief on its activities. The active membership includes ten UN agencies: UNDP, UNDCP, UNHCR, FAO, WFP, UNOPS, UNIDO, WHO, UNICEF and UNOCHA (Mine Action) and six NGOs: ACBAR, DACCAR, HAFO, MCI, SWABAC and VARA. The eleven other interested agencies are: ADA, ADB, ANCB, CDAP, ILO, IOM, ProMIS, UNCHS, UNESCO, UNFPA and the World Bank.

Since its inception the HPG has held four meetings, 28 April, 17 May, 9 June and 22 June 1999. The principal activity to date has been to commission the Survey Unit of the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) to conduct Baseline and Socio-economic Surveys in Helmand province to provide current data for forward planning. The strategy outline has been prepared in advance of the survey results being available and to that extent it is incomplete, in that it lacks the detailed information which would assist in quantifying options for action and in ranking development alternatives. ACBAR advise that as at mid-November 1999, all survey field work has been completed and data entry is well advanced. The draft Baseline Survey report was released in December 1999 and the draft Socio-Economic Survey report in April 2000.

2.3 THE HELMAND SETTING

Helmand province is located in southern Afghanistan, between Qandahar and Oruzgan provinces to the east and north-east and Nimroz and Farah to the west and north-west (see Map 1). With an area of 62,337 sq km it is the largest province in Afghanistan.

Topographically the province is rocky foothills in the north blending in the centre to relatively flat, clay desert, becoming sandier to the south and east. The principal physical feature is the Helmand River, which roughly bisects the province diagonally from north-east to south-west (see Map 1). It rises in a western extension of the Hindu Kush just west of Kabul and runs south-west for 536 km where it joins the Arghandab River just below Lashkar Gah. The combined rivers continue for another 430 km to the marshes of the Sistan basin.[10]

Geographically the province is part of the larger Helmand Valley-Sistan Basin region which includes parts of Qandahar, most of Helmand and part of Nimroz provinces. In this region, mean annual precipitation is less than 100 mm, rising to 200-300 mm in the northern foothills of the Central Mountain above 1000 m in altitude. The number of dry months varies from 12 in the south-west to 9 months in the foothills. A local phenomenon is the 'wind of 120 days' (*bad-i-sad-o-bist-roz*) with winds of gradually increasing strength from July and blowing through until September (mean maximum September wind strength is 173 km/day). Seasonal dust storms (*khakbad* or dust wind) also occur.[11]

With most of the province as desert, the river flood plain is the major focus of the population. Although notional average population density of Helmand province is around 7 persons/sq

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[10] Shairzai, F, Farouq, G and Scott R. 1975. *Farm Economic Survey of the Helmand Valley*. USAID/DP, Kabul. p.2.

[11] Berding, Frank R. 1997. *Land Management Report* in *Afghanistan Agricultural Strategy*, FAO Rome 1997. see Section 2.2.9, pp.21-23.

km, in fact the settled population is concentrated along the river either in the foothill regions with irrigation fed by streams, springs or kareze, or on the large-scale irrigation development of the central plain.[12] In 1975, total cultivable land in the province was estimated at 2,846 sq km (4.5% of area) and total irrigable land at 1,589 sq km (2.5% of area).[13] Total area of the main Helmand irrigation scheme centered on Lashkar Gah and serviced by the Boghra, Shamalan, Seraj and Darweshan canals, was 1440 sq km.[14]

Climatic conditions for irrigated agriculture are generally good. The hot days and relatively cool nights of summer, the mild winter and the long growing season (av. 269 frost-free days) with good light intensity are all favourable factors for plant growth in Helmand. The summers are hot and dry with daily temperatures well above 38^0C (100^0F). While the winters are mild, there are sufficient frosts to limit the range of possible crops.[15]

The soils are more problematic for irrigated agriculture. Soils in south-west Afghanistan are nutrient deficient and low in organic matter. In the upland areas they are generally poorly structured while in the river flood plain they are better structured silty or sandy loams. However, these often overlie a compacted layer at 1.5 to 3 metres depth which severely impedes percolation. Irrigated agriculture requires extensive drainage to avoid perched water tables and localised salinisation.

The Helmand valley has been a centre of irrigated agriculture since ancient times. The extensive ruins of ancient civilisations along the central and southern Helmand river give evidence to the existence of a major and prosperous agricultural society based upon extensive irrigation. What was once the bread basket of central Asia was destroyed by successive hordes of invaders from the north and west.[16]

In the current century, the first few canals for a large-scale irrigation development were constructed between 1910 and 1914. In the 1930s, the Germans and then the Japanese provided assistance in the development of canals at Boghra. The development of the major Helmand Valley irrigation scheme was undertaken with American assistance between 1945 and 1953. From the outset there were significant problems. As described by Dupree, 'from its conception the project was beset by human problems at all levels, from peasant resistance to bureaucratic incompetence. Neither the Afghan government nor the American engineering company understood the monumental problems of enfolding an entire region in the embrace of a single project'. 'There were misunderstandings between the government and the developers, a failure to undertake vital soil and ground-water surveys and major escalations in costs which led to crucial drainage works not being done'. [17]

Following the completion of the construction works in 1953, the Helmand Valley Authority (HVA) and the Afghan Construction Unit (ACU) were established and continued the construction, operation and maintenance activities for the system. In 1966 the HVA changed to the Helmand-Arghandab Valleys Authority (HAVA). Prior to Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the Helmand Irrigation system was well managed and maintained, however until 1998-99 the system had received little or no maintenance since 1979. Regular canal and drain cleaning were not possible because of civil and military conflict. Blocked drainage had led to waterlogging, salinisation, and the abandonment of land by farmers. Many of the irrigation

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[12] Scott, Richard B. 1980. *Tribal and Ethnic Groups in the Helmand Valley.* Occasional Paper #21, Afghanistan Council of the Asia Society, New York. pp.2-3.

[13] Shairzai, F, *et al.* op cit. p.2.

[14] Klemm, Walter, 1997. *Water Resources and Irrigation Report* in *Afghanistan Agricultural Strategy*, FAO Rome 1997. see Section 3. pp. 13-17.

[15] Shairzai, F, *et al.* op. cit. p.3.

[16] Shairzai F. *et al.* op. cit. p.7.

[17] Dupree, Louis, 1980. *Afghanistan.* Princeton University Press, New Jersey. pp. 482-485.

structures had been damaged or dismantled so that regulating the water flow was not possible. Much of the heavy equipment and machinery had been looted and the remainder was badly in need of repair.[18] During the 1998-99 winter, Mercy Corps International (MCI) undertook remedial work to reinstate the Boghra Canal offtake and rehabilitate a significant length of the canal, including control structures, between the river offtake and Marja district.[19]

Helmand province can be divided into two distinct sectors. The six districts in the northern foothills; Baghran, Kajaki, Musa Qala, Saban Qala, Naw Zad and Washir, (see Maps 1 and 2) are largely dependent for irrigation on traditional water sources. These areas have been farmed for very long periods, based on local river diversions into canals or water drawn from *kareze*.[20] These are largely water-short regions where, after many generations of inheritance, landholdings are small and fragmented. At the same time, some kareze are privately owned. In this situation the owner can rent out access to water, or land and water. While the focus of this strategy is on Helmand, these districts can be seen as representative of a wider area of Hindu Kush foothills including eastern Farah and northern Qandahar.

Further south, on the main river flood plain in central Helmand, the development has been a modern, large-scale high technology-based system with substantial high-volume canals commanding large irrigated areas. Confusion can arise when reading earlier reports, as there have been some changes in the definition and naming of districts In the 1970s, the districts in the centre and south were known as Sanguin, Girishk, Central (Lashkar Gah), Nad-e-Ali, Marja, Shamalan and further south, Darweshan. These are now known as Nahr-e-Saraj, Bust, Marja, Nad-e-Ali, Nawa Barakzai, Khanishin, Garmser and Dehshu. The main Helmand Valley irrigation scheme is located in the first four of these districts. Close to the Iranian border, is the isolated district of Khanishin. In this area irrigation is again based on indigenous systems, however there are significant water shortages and as a consequence, while farm sizes are large, the annual area irrigated is generally small.[21]

As the main Helmand Valley scheme was opened-up, it was used to resettle landless people from other areas, particularly Gilzai Pushtuns from eastern Afghanistan. One consequence of this situation is that the traditional long-standing, close-knit community structure which typifies so much of rural Afghanistan is not as well developed in central Helmand as it is elsewhere. A second consequence flowed from the fact that settlers were taken from a range of prior occupations. The largest number were previously farm labourers (37%) and semi-nomadic herders (31%), while the lesser categories included a wide range of people with little or no agricultural experience.[22] Ultimately many of those lacking prior experience, including many nomads who were ill-suited to sedentary farming, failed as farmers. Over a period, these failures have led to changes in land ownership and the accumulation of larger parcels of land by the more successful farmers.

Farm size varies across the modern Helmand Valley irrigation scheme. In the early phases of development until the 1970s, areas allocated were of the order of 6 ha/settler (30 jeribs), which was a substantial living area. In the later years (1970s), the perceived need to settle more people led to a reduction of allocated areas to a much smaller 2 ha/settler (10 jeribs). Given the known problems of inadequate soil surveys and uneven drainage, this was a decision which has created ongoing problems.

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[18] Sayed Sharif Shobair, 1998. *Brief Information about the Helmand Irrigation Scheme*. Back-to-office report on mission to Helmand, FAO Peshawar, April 1998. This report is a source document for information on the current (1998) status of various canals and irrigated areas.

[19] Scott, Richard B, 1999. *Report on Boghra Canal Works.* Helping Afghan Farmers Organisation, Peshawar, 1999.

[20] Kareze: Underground tunnels which capture groundwater flow and enable this to be brought to the surface for irrigation.

[21] Shairzai, F, *et al.* op. cit, pp. 4-7.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

HELMAND PLANNING GROUP

HELMAND INITIATIVE

JOINT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

SECOND DRAFT

ISLAMABAD

May 2000

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UNITS AND CURRENCY

Jerib	0.2 hectares
Mann (maung)	4.5 kg
Seer	7.0 kg
Pakistani rupee	PkR 1.00 = Afs 800 (approximate as at July 1999)
US dollar	US$ 1.00 = Afs 42750 (approximate as at July 1999 and is the conversion figure used in the report)

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ACLU	Afghan Construction and Logistics Unit
ACU	Afghan Construction Unit
ADA	Afghan Development Association
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANCB	Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau
CDAP	Comprehensive Disabled Afghans' Programme
DACCAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN
HAFO	Helping Afghan Farmers Organisation
HAVA	Helmand and Arghandab Valley Authority
HPG	Helmand Planning Group
HVA	Helmand Valley Authority
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MCI	Mercy Corps International
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PDPA	Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PIHAM	Animal Health and Production Improvement Module
ProMIS	Project Management Information System
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
SWABAC	Southern and Western Afghanistan Baluchistan Association for Coordination
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (Habitat)
UNESCO	United Nations Environmental, Cultural and Scientific Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Childrens Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid to Afghanistan
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSMA	United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan
VARA	Voluntary Association for Rehabilitation of Afghanistan
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation